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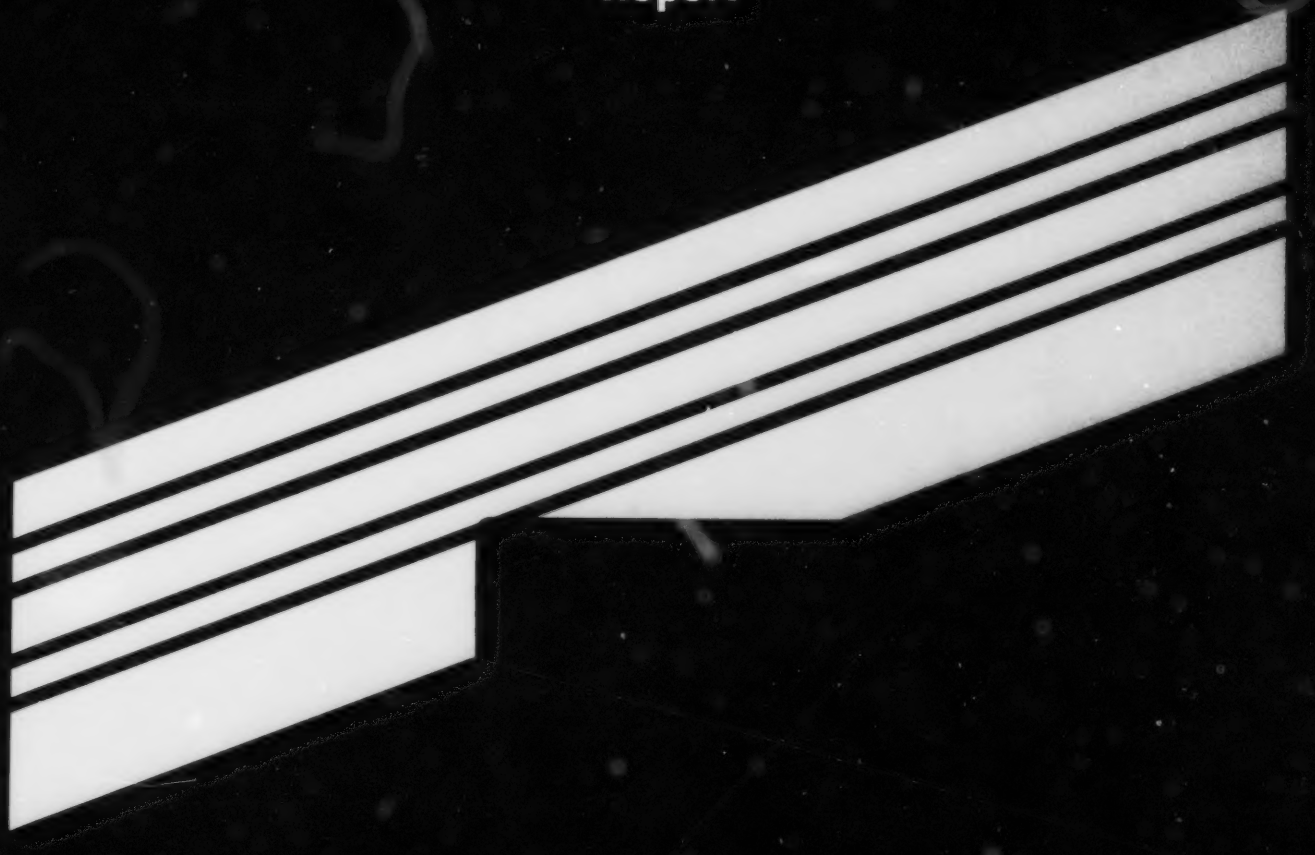

Solicitor General Canada
Ministry Secretariat

Canada

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with

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SURVEY OF FEDERALLY SENTENCED WOMEN

Report to the Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women on the Prison Survey

No. 1991-4

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An enormous number of people made this survey possible and helped in its completion. Our principle debt is to the women who took part in the interviews, both for being willing to sharing their experiences and views with us, but also for putting aside for a time any cynicism they may feel about the possibilities for change.

We hope that in the end they will feel that their time was well spent.

Apart from the women, we would like to thank the members of the Task Force and Correctional Service Canada who helped the survey get off the ground, Mary Cassidy and the staff at Prison for Women, and the many provincial prison administrators and staff for their cooperation in making visits to their prisons and interviews possible.

Finally, we are grateful to John Evans and the Secretariat for funding the project, and to Jane Miller Ashton, and we owe a special debt to Bob Cormier, Joan Nuffield and Daryl Webber, and to Rosemary O'Brian for their continued and persistent support and help through what was not a simple task.

PREFACE

This report records the views and experiences of federally sentenced women in prisons across Canada, and would not have been possible without their extensive and often heartfelt cooperation, and for this we are very grateful.

The report also reflects the impressions and involvement of the five women to whom they talked at such great length - Karen Rodgers, Johanne Blanchette, Tina Hattem, Lee Seto Thomas and Lada Tamarack. Their input into the study has been immeasurable, both in their encouragement to the women themselves and in the qualities which they brought to those interviews, but also in their continued involvement in the study, and their insights and comments on issues and drafts. While their input has been central, any misinterpretations in this draft remain those of the principal writer.

The views of those who work with federally sentenced women and provide the services and programmes available to them were not
sought in this survey, but this is not to suggest that they are of no account. The survey records the perceptions of those who experience imprisonment, and in whose treatment we are all implicated.

This final version differs only in terms of minor amendments from the interim report prepared for the Task Force in December 1989. In now includes responses from all 170 of the women interviewed. It was produced as a 'working document' for the Task Force, and should remain in that format.

While the survey was undertaken primarily for the Task Force, it also forms part of a larger study of federally sentenced women initiated by the Secretariat of the Solicitor General. An earlier report The Federal Female Offender: Report on a Preliminary Study (1991-3) deals with the background to the imprisonment of women in Canada. Two further reports arising from the study have now also been completed, a report on the second survey conducted for the Task Force (The Release Study: Survey of Federally Sentenced Women in the Community, 1991-5) and a final report which looks at the backgrounds of the women and tries to place their offending and prison experience in the context of their life experiences (Paying the Price: Federally Sentenced Women in Context). A report-back to the women themselves (What You Said/Vos Commentaires) has also been distributed to as many as could be contacted.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of a survey undertaken on behalf of the Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women. It was designed to assess the views of all federally sentenced women in prison about their experiences of imprisonment, and the kinds of programmes and services they feel they need, and to provide a broader profile of the population than that routinely available. The experiences of aboriginal women, those in provincial prisons, and those serving long sentences were of particular concern.

The survey was based on interviews with all women at the Prison for Women in Kingston (P4W), and all those serving federal sentences under Exchange of Service Agreements in provincial prisons. Interviews took place between August and November 1989. A total of 170 women (84%) agreed to take part on interviews, 12% refused and the remainder could not be seen for other reasons.

SECTION I

PROFILE OF THE POPULATION

At the time of the survey 203 women were currently serving federal sentences within prison. Of these, 125 were at the Prison for Women and 78 in provincial prisons (32 in Quebec, 7 in Manitoba, 5 in Saskatchewan, 20 in Alberta and 14 in British Columbia).

Twenty three percent (44) of the population were of Aboriginal origin, and 21% (43) were french-speaking. Twenty five of the Aboriginal women were located at P4W, the remainder in provincial prisons. Seventeen francophones were located outside Quebec. Among the rest of the population there were 10 women from outside Canada, some of whom had considerable communication problems.

Prior to their conviction, the women had been living in a wide range of communities and reserves across Canada. Those in provincial prisons were on the whole from those provinces and intended to remain there on their release. Those at P4W were less likely to know where they were going on release or to be returning to the province in which they had been living.

Altogether 48% were serving sentences of under 5 years, 22% between 5 and 9 years, and 30% ten years or more. A total of 37 (20%) women were serving life sentences, 8 of them with a minimum of 25 years before parole eligibility. The majority of women serving sentences of 5 years or more were at P4W, but 31 including 9 lifers were in provincial prisons, primarily in Quebec.

Overall, 42% of the population were serving sentences for murder or manslaughter, 27% for robbery and other more minor violent offenses, and 31% for non-violent offenses. Over a third of the population were first offenders with no previous convictions, and for 87% this was their first federal sentence. Half of them had never received a prison sentence before.

They ranged in age from 19 to 75, those in provincial prisons being slightly younger, and a third of them had never married or lived in common-law relationships. Two thirds of them had children.

SECTION II

THE EXPERIENCE OF IMPRISONMENT

The Provincial Experience

Most women in provincial prisons have a negative view of P4W and do not want to go there. On the whole relationships with staff or other inmates are better than at P4W, although discipline tends to be unnecessarily restrictive. They often have little information on their rights as federal prisoners, or the kinds of services and programmes which could be made available to them elsewhere. They have almost no opportunities for vocational training, and little beyond limited access to basic educational upgrading. Recreational facilities are often very limited, and there is little appropriate support for women needing counselling for abuse or addiction problems. The major benefit is that contact with families is considerably greater than among those at P4W.

The limitations of identifying needs

The main purpose of interviewing the women was to discover their views on the problems of being a federal prisoner, whether in the provinces or P4W, and the kinds of services and programmes they feel they need. To focus only on needs for programmes, however, is to ignore the context in which women in prison spend their time, or the influence which the conditions of imprisonment and the behaviour of others has on their behaviour.

The overriding picture which emerges from the survey is of the central role which human relations play, and of how the women have or should be treated. Relationships with staff and others both inside and outside prison colour most aspects of their experiences. No amount of programming or new accommodation can compensate for a failure to treat them as human beings, as women, with respect and dignity. This view is most apparent in their experience of health treatment, and in relation to issues such as discipline, grievances, security, and the needs of staff working with women in prison, but it underlines almost all other issues and experiences about which they talked.

Children, families and community contact

Two thirds of the women were mothers (between them they had 274 children). Those with children were more likely to be located in the provinces (75%) than at P4W (58%). Some of those children had been adopted at birth (10 cases) some fostered or adopted out more recently, and some were now adults. Among those women interviewed 81 (48%) had at least one child aged 16 years or under in whose upbringing they have had some responsibility, and 41 (24%) at least one child under five.

Overall, 70% of those with children had been single parents for all or part of the time. The majority of dependant children were now being cared for by relatives, followed by foster parents.

The majority of women in the provinces saw their children regularly every week, often several times. At P4W while many kept in regular but remote contact, very few had visits, and certainly not on a regular basis. There was far more interest at P4W in programmes about being a parent in prison. For most women, contact with their children is of crucial importance to them <u>regardless</u> of the age of the children.

In general, provincial visiting facilities for children were very inadequate, few had access to overnight accommodation, or play areas for children, or allowed children in for longer than visiting hours. Not all prisons allowed contact visits automatically, and some women had reduced visits

because of excessive strip searching (in response to the high level of illicit drug use within the prisons). Many women requested longer hours of access, access to some free telephone calls out of province, and assistance with transport for children living long distances from the prison. In P4W they wanted visits.

There was a clear need for legal advice and advocacy for a number of women who had lost custody of or access to their children as a result of imprisonment. Many of these women were denied access to children in care because of distance, lack of funding or disputes with those caring for them. Better policies for coping with the children of women in prison which facilitate continued contact as far as possible, need to be established.

As with children, only 30% of women at P4W had any visits with family or friends, compared with threequarters of those in the provinces. Aboriginal women wanted greater contact with native elders, and those from overseas with people from their own cultures.

Physical and mental health

Health is a major concern to almost all the women. Almost threequarters of women in provincial prisons, and just under half of those at P4W expressed concerns about their health, some of them reporting very serious conditions and anxieties, and only a third of the population overall felt health care was adequate.

They expressed a strong need for far better access to physical and mental health services (including dental care) to better and alternative advice, native health care, different medication, and different attitudes on the part of medical staff who often treat them as offenders rather than patients.

Better access to mental health services is also required and not just as a response to a crisis situation. Some psychologists were helpful but psychiatric care in particular was found to be very inadequate. Many women found psychiatrists unhelpful, unwilling to discuss their problems, and primarily concerned with giving them pills and 'bug juice'. The issue of overmedication, or of inappropriate medication was of great concern.

A number of women felt there should be special programmes and assistance for women with mental health problems and for slashers, and that segregation was an inappropriate way do deal with such women.

Over half the population thought they were in poorer shape than when they came in, and many women felt there should be far more emphasis on preventive health care (through better diet, exercise, fresh air, and regular dentistry and medical check-ups). Many wanted programmes on health and well-being and diet. Food was almost universally condemned as greasy and starchy "heavy, greasy and geared to the working man"). There was a lack of salads, fresh fruit and proper diets, vegetarians often living on peanut butter and bread. Exercise time and facilities were severely limited in most provincial prisons (sometimes just 45 minutes a day in a concrete yard, when staff and enough women could be found). Far more organization of sports and exercises was requested.

Drug and alcohol experience

Threequarters of the population interviewed had at some stage in their lives been addicted to alcohol or drugs, or had some involvement in drug abuse. Of these all but 17 had some current

addiction problem: 51 were addicted to drugs, 27 to alcohol, and 31 to both. Native offenders in particular had experienced severe and prolonged addiction problems.

Altogether, 120 women (71%) said that substance abuse has played a major part in their offence or their offending history, 88 said they (usually) offended under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, 40 to support their habit, and 49 have been convicted of drug related offenses (trafficking, possession etc).

There were problems with treatment programmes within prison seen to be conditions for parole. Women felt they should have the choice of attending programmes or not. The quality and coverage of AA or NA programmes was very varied, and the Christian basis of such programmes was found to be inappropriate by some women. The availability of long residential programmes outside prisons was limited, but appeared to be a far more satisfactory experience for those women who had taken them. There was a particular need for native-run programmes. Better group programmes within prison were also wanted.

Physical and sexual abuse

Overall 68% (115) of the population interviewed said they had been physically abused at some stage of their lives. In a few cases this amounted to occasional childhood discipline, but mostly it was took place regularly over long periods of time in childhood, during adolescence or as adults. Some had been abused throughout their lives by parents, other relatives, foster parents or institutional staff, and by boyfriends and common-law partners.

Fifty three percent (90) said they has been sexually abused at some time in their lives, in some cases regularly during childhood or adolescence by relatives or foster parents. Others had been raped or sexually abused in adolescence or adulthood by people they knew, as well as strangers.

Among the native population, however, the incidence of abuse was far higher, 90% said they had been physically abused during their lives, usually regularly over long periods, and 61% sexually abused.

There is no way of knowing how accurate such information is, but only two women refused to answer questions about abuse. Recent programmes and counselling on abuse at P4W had been very successful. No specific programmes appeared to exist in provincial prisons. Not all women felt they needed help in dealing with abuse, and did not feel it should be made a condition of parole. Of those who did, the majority wanted individual counselling with specialist counsellors, and native women programmes run by natives.

In response to the many stresses in their lives, just over half the women (53%) said that they has abused themselves by cutting or slashing, or attempted to commit suicide at some stage in their lives. In most cases this had been prior to their commitment, but for 20% it was during the current sentence.

The links between experience of physical and sexual abuse, abuse of drugs and alcohol, and offending are apparent for many of the women and point to the overwhelming importance of programmes and daily care which help to provide them with support and understanding, and the practical skills necessary to begin to overcome the effects on their lives.

Work and training

Fewer than one third of the population interviewed had any formal qualifications beyond basic education prior to this sentence, and of the rest the majority had not achieved school leaving requirements. Most had worked in unskilled service industry jobs in shops, bars, offices, and unskilled manual work. Just over a third of the women had always worked, 40% had found difficulty finding work when they wanted it, and 15% had never worked legitimately. Native women were particularly disadvantaged in terms of their educational backgrounds.

The provision of training and educational facilities in prison is of major importance to most women. In the provinces there was almost no access to vocational training programmes. Most women spent their time working at domestic tasks around the institution, a few on occasional contract work. Only 12 women in the provinces had taken training courses (hairdressing, a three day first aid course and dog training), compared with 52 of the women at P4W. More women in the provinces had taken educational courses but its availability was mostly restricted to upgrading, money for correspondence courses was limited, and pay for attending school much lower than for prison jobs. Courses at P4W were felt to be very limited and out of date, with the exception of those taken in nearby men's prisons.

Very few women (usually older women and those at the end of their sentence) said they did not want to take any work related courses. For the rest there was a very clear demand for workable training skills (e.g., office skills, laboratory technician, computing) for advanced skills in areas such as computing, printing, photography, carpentry, and skilled trades (heavy machinery, carpentry, kitchen trades, industrial sewing), for social work training (nursing, child care, street youth work, ex-offenders) and for school, post secondary and university courses. What the women want are marketable skills with qualifications and certificates.

Doing time: programmes choices

Apart from limited education and training courses, some contact with native elders, a certain amount of drug and alcohol abuse programming (mostly AA or NA), and a few courses on parenting or life or communication skills, women in provincial prisons had not had much access to programmes within the institution. Those at P4W had had access to a wider range of alcohol and drug abuse programmes, programmes for physical and sexual abuse, native spirituality and culture, parenting and life skills. Many felt there should be more. The most widely requested were work release and pre-reléase programmes, programmes on health, legal advice and assistance, programmes on money and budgeting, programmes for those serving long-term sentences, programmes concerning children, and native cultural and spiritual programmes. Altogether 31 of the 82 long termers wanted programmes on long sentences. AA and NA programmes within prison depended a great deal on the staff running them and many women felt they were not taken seriously in prison, they wanted longer group or residential programmes. There was a clear need for programmes on physical and sexual abuse, and for native-based programmes for addiction and abuse, and for programmes and services in French or English for women serving sentences outside their appropriate province.

An issue with considerable implications for programming is that of choice. Many women wanted the choice to take or not to take programmes, particularly in relation to addiction, and mental health care, and to have some control over involvement within programmes.

Discipline, punishment and redress

Disciplinary rules were felt everywhere to be petty, inconsistent and unfair ("I wouldn't impose some of these rules in a nursery school") and disciplinary decisions inconsistent and unnecessarily harsh. They suggested clearer guidelines and less discretion, and greater emphasis on talking problems over rather than punishment. Native offenders appeared to be more likely to receive charges, and the threat of transfer to P4W was used to quieten complaints in some provincial prisons. Only 4% of women at P4W thought the newly introduced Unit Management system was working, most said it had resulted in increased security and worse inmate-staff relationships and that the staff were inappropriate.

Formal inmate grievances procedures do not exist in the provincial prisons. Alternative avenues for complaint (to the Director, Ombudsman, inmate committee) seemed no more satisfactory than the formal system at P4W which only 3% thought worked well.

Asked what training staff needed to work in a women's prison, 50% said courses in psychology, human relations and communication skills, and in the problems of addiction, physical and sexual abuse and native culture and experiences. A further 25% felt that the most important criteria was to recruit staff who treated women with respect, understanding and compassion, and whose response to difficult behaviour was not punishment but a willingness to talk over problems.

Doing time: lifers and long-termers

Women serving life sentences, many of whom were first offenders, found the strain of a long sentence very difficult. They wanted greater access to families and family counselling, and mental health services, earlier temporary release, places to which they could retreat, and greater access to good recreational programmes. One-to-one vocational planning was essential, and should not be limited by security levels. Financial advice and some autonomy was also thought important.

Aboriginal women in prison

The aboriginal women came from a wide variety of tribes, but uniformly wanted greater recognition of their spiritual and cultural backgrounds and access to native staff, elders, traditions and native-based programmes. In general they had experienced much greater disruption in their lives than non-natives, and had greater difficulties in terms of addiction, levels of abuse, work skills and employment and discrimination because of their position as natives within Canadian society. Within prison they felt there was little awareness of their needs or experiences as natives.

Alternatives and choices

Only 19 women would opt to remain in P4W given a range of alternatives. Of these the majority came from nearby towns, had no specific ties, or were from outside Canada. Three women chose an alternative central federal prison for women; 32 a regional prison for federal women; 43 a regional co-educational federal prison; 11 a provincial women's prison; 8 a provincial co-educational prison; and 82 a small community residence for women close to their home. A further 9 women suggested a farm, community work, a native half-way house, or transfer to their country of origin.

There was little difference between the choices made by those serving short sentences under five years, and long termers serving over five years - except that no long term women in provincial prisons would choose to stay in a provincial facility.

In the view of the great majority of women they did not require the close security of P4W, and especially in the provinces, wanted 'support' not security. Only 27 of the women serving long term sentences felt they needed some security.

Asked what were the most important factors influencing choice of accommodation, 115 women said being as near home as possible, 68 access to programmes, 37 being with women serving similar sentences, and 27 being in a single sex prison.

Asked if they would choose to serve their time in a co-correctional prison, 50 women at P4W and 29 in the provinces said yes, on condition that they had separate living quarters. Their main reasons for such an option were that they would prefer a more normal atmosphere, and would like access to more programmes. Forty six women at P4W and 24 in the provinces would not want to be in a mixed prison, primarily because they did not think it appropriate for women with histories of abuse, or did not like men.

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SURVEY OF FEDERALLY SENTENCED WOMEN

THE PRISON SURVEY

1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the preliminary findings of the survey of the federally sentenced female population, undertaken as part of the work of the Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women.[1] The survey took part in two phases. The first phase, involving the women currently in prison, was conducted between July and November 1989, and designed to cover the entire incarcerated population of federal offenders, both those in the Prison for Women at Kingston, and those in provincial institutions across Canada under Exchange of Service Agreements. The second phase was conducted during November and January 1989 and included all those women on supervision in the community who were willing to be interviewed.[2] A full report on the community survey and a more detailed report on the prison phase of the study have been completed subsequently.[3]

The overall purpose of the survey was to provide the Task Force with information about the current population as a basis for its deliberations on future provision for federally sentenced women. It was designed to provide a broader picture of the federal population than is normally available, and to assess the views of the women themselves on the experience of imprisonment, their need for programmes and services, and on where and under what conditions they might prefer to serve their sentences. Few previous Task Forces or committees of inquiry concerned with the federal female offenders have asked the women themselves what they think, and this was felt to be an essential element of the work of the current Task Force.

A number of issues have influenced the focus of the survey, in particular the need to document the experiences and concerns of the aboriginal population in prison; the need to assess the differences in treatment and provision experienced by women serving federal sentences in the provinces compared with those at the Prison for Women; and the need to consider the specific problems of women serving very long sentences.

Because of the short timeframe established for the Task Force,[4] severe time constraints were imposed on the conduct of the survey, some of which are discussed in Appendix IV. In particular, it was necessary to report back to the Task Force by December 1989. The resulting report was produced as a working document, therefore, and without the more considered presentation which

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[1]. See Creating Choices: Report of the Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women April 1990, Ottawa: Correctional Service Canada. The current report forms Companion Volume # 2 to the Task Force report.

[2]. The community phase of the study excluded all aboriginal women who were the subject of the separate survey undertaken by the Native Women's Association of Canada Survey of Federally Sentenced Aboriginal Women in the Community, Ottawa, January 1990. Companion Volume No.1 to the Task Force report.

[3]. These are the third report in this series The Release Study : Survey of Federally Sentenced Women in the Community 1991-5; and the fourth report Paying the Price: Federally Sentenced Women in Context 1991, Ottawa: Ministry of the Solicitor General.

[4]. It was appointed in May and asked to report by December 1989.

would be possible under more normal research conditions. This should be borne in mind in reading the report.

This report is divided into two sections. Section I provides a brief outline of the federal population in prison at the time of the study and the overall response to the survey. Section II presents the results of the interviews. It considers the responses of the population concerning their experiences of imprisonment and the services they feel they need, their views of the provision of programmes, on alternative housing, and the importance of location and programme provision in their assessment of where they would prefer to be. It attempts to draw together the overall picture of the central importance of the attitudes of all personnel in their dealings with women in prison.

SECTION I

2. THE PRISON SURVEY

The survey was conducted between July and November 1989. Interviews were held at the Prison for Women up to October. Interviews with women in the provinces took place from September to November. All federally sentenced women on register at the start of interviewing were invited to take part (see Appendix IV).

The total number of women on register and in residence at the time of the survey (i.e., excluding those absent without leave, or on day parole outside prison[5]) was 203. Of these 170 (84%) agreed to take part in the interviews. Twenty five (12%) refused the interview, and a further 8 women (4%) were not seen for administrative reasons (e.g., they were released before seen, or unavailable within the time allocated for specific interviewers). The response on the part of the women to the Task Force was thus very high and reflected their hopes that this Task Force would be influential in bringing about changes in the conditions under which federal women serve their sentences. Table 1 below shows the distribution of responses between the Prison for Women and the provinces.

Population Interviewed			
Prison for Women	102	60 %	
Quebec	27)		
Manitoba	7)		
Saskatchewan	5)	40 %	
Alberta	17)		
B.C.	12)		
Total Interviews	170	100 %	84%

Population not interviewed

a)	Refused interview:		
	Prison for Women	15	
	All provinces	10	
	Total refusals:	25	12%
b)	Not seen for administrative reasons (all at P4W):	8	4%
	Total population at time of survey:	203	100%

[5]. e.g., Eleven women on register at Maison Tanguay in Montreal are located in nearby houses on 'absence temporaires'.

Apart from interviews, basic information on the backgrounds of the total population of federal women was collated from files, with the exception of some of those not interviewed in the provinces. Thus background information was not obtained for four women.

3. PROFILE OF THE POPULATION

At the time of the survey, of the 203 women serving federal sentences in prison, 125 were located at the Prison for Women in Kingston (P4W), and 78 in the provinces under Exchange of Service Agreements.

Native Population

Among this population 46 (23%) were aboriginal. Of these 39 were interviewed (22 at Prison for Women, and 17 in the provinces) 5 refused interviews, and 2 could not be seen for administrative reasons.

French-speaking Population

A total of 43 (21%) women in the population were French-Canadian. Of these 30 were interviewed in French, three chose to be interviewed in English, 8 refused interviews and three could not be seen for administrative reasons.

The distribution of the total population at the time of the survey is shown in table 2 (on next page).

TABLE 2

Distribution of Incarcerated Federal Population				
Location	Native	French	Other	Total
Prison for Women	25*	14*	87	125
Quebec	1*	26*	6	32
Manitoba	4	-	3	7
Saskatchewan	5	-	-	5
Alberta	6	2	12	20
B.C.	5	1	8	14
Number of women	46*	43*	116	203

(* two women are both Native and French-speaking)

Prior to their conviction, the women had been living in a wide range of cities, towns, small communities and reserves across Canada: 42 in Ontario, 49 in Quebec, 15 in the Maritime provinces, 12 in Manitoba, 13 in Saskatchewan, 34 in Alberta and 28 in British Columbia. Ten women came from outside Canada, mainly Hong Kong and the USA or South America, but they

included 5 whose mother tongue was not English or French, and who had considerable communication difficulties.

Current sentence

Sentence lengths for the population ranged from under two years for a few returned to prison for subsequent sentences while on parole, to those serving life sentences with a minimum of twenty five years before parole eligibility. Altogether 98 (48%) were serving sentences of under 5 years, 45 (22%) between 5 and 9 years, and 60 (30%) ten years or more (Table 3).

Table 3

Distribution of the current population by length of sentence						
	Prison for Women		Provinces		Total	
Two to four years	46	(37 %)	52	(67 %)	98	48 %
Five to nine years	31	(25 %)	14	(18 %)	45	22 %
Ten years or more	48	(38 %)	12	(15 %)	60	30 %
Number of women	125		78		203	100 %

Forty-six (23%) of these women were serving life sentences, 10 of them with a minimum of 25 years before parole eligibility date. The majority of long sentence women serving five years or more were located in P4W, but 26 including 10 lifers were in provincial prisons, primarily in Quebec.

Forty four women were serving sentences for first or second degree murder, 38 for manslaughter, 3 for attempted murder, 24 for robbery, 21 for assaults and arson etc., 30 for theft, fraud and breaking and entering, 24 for drug offenses and 9 for other offenses (Table 4). Overall, therefore, 42% of the population were serving sentences for murder or manslaughter, 27% for robbery and other more minor violent offences, and 31% for non-violent offenses.

Slightly higher proportions of women serving sentences for non-violent offenses and manslaughter were housed in provincial prisons than in P4W, and a higher proportion of murder cases in P4W than the provinces. This reflects the tendency for women serving longer sentences to be transferred to P4W.

Table 4

Distribution of the current population by offence [6]		
Murder	44	
Attempted murder	3	42 %
Manslaughter	38	
Robbery	34	27 %
Assaults	21	
Theft, fraud etc.	30	
Drug offenses	24	31 %
Other	9	
Number of women	203	100 %

Over a third (36%) of these women are first offenders with no previous convictions. For 87% this is their first federal sentence. Half of them (50%) have never been in prison before either for a provincial or federal sentence.

Other factors

They ranged in age from 19 to 74 years, with an average of 33 years. Those in provincial prisons tended to be slightly younger than those at P4W.

A third of the population were single (34%) and had never married or lived in common-law relationships. The same proportion were married or had current common-law relationships, and the remainder were separated, divorced or widowed. In many cases, the women have lived in more than one common-law relationship, or been married several times. However, current marital status does not provide any real information about their family responsibilities or community ties and support. Two thirds of the women had children (65%).

Profile information provides very little information about the backgrounds of the women or the circumstances of their offenses. It does not indicate, for example, the extent to which their offending is linked to abusive personal relationships or to addiction to drugs or alcohol. A fuller account of the backgrounds of the population and the links with offending is discussed in the fourth report in this series. The remainder of this report is concerned with what the 170 women who took part in interviews had to say about their experiences of imprisonment.

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[6]. Providing a precise account of current offence is difficult since some women are serving sentences for offenses committed while completing a prior federal sentence. Fifty eight women had been returned to prison for revocation of release conditions, 31 of them for committing a new offence. This table groups those 31 women under their new offence.

SECTION II

4. THE EXPERIENCE OF IMPRISONMENT - WHAT THE WOMEN HAVE TO SAY TO THE TASK FORCE

This report is concerned with what the women currently in prison have to say to the Task Force. It relays their concerns with being inside, how they are treated, what angers, frustrates or depresses them and what has helped them. It records their views on the kinds of services and programmes which they have experienced or would like to have access to, as well as their views on the problems of being located far from home, or without access to a range of programmes.

The interviews with the women were often long and detailed sometimes lasting for two hours or more, and this preliminary report summarises their views on the main issues of immediate concern to the Task Force.

The Overall Response

The first thing that must be said is that there has been a tremendous response from the women to the Task Force's invitation to give their views. Not only did most women take part in the interviews, many of them also had a lot to say, and while there was some initial cynicism about the likelihood of any changes taking place, there was a great deal more hope that this Task Force would at last be effective in bringing about changes in the conditions under which federal women serve their sentences.

Secondly, what they had to say almost always included excellent suggestions, and many very level-headed recommendations. There were some appalling stories and some very satisfactory ones, but it is amply clear that the experiences and views of the women themselves are of crucial importance.

What was also evident was that the women in the provinces were particularly glad for an opportunity to talk. Unlike many women at the Prison for Women who have often been interviewed by a string of investigators and researchers they are unused to interviews with outsiders. They also have less collective knowledge about their rights and position as a minority group within a much larger provincial population.

The Provincial Experience

While there are a number of similarities between the women in provincial prisons and those at the Prison for Women in terms of their reactions to treatment by staff, to the inadequacies of services or the application of disciplinary procedures, and to the programmes that they feel they need, there were also considerable differences between the experiences of the two groups of women.

"The cold hard bitterness of women in P4W"

On the whole very few women in the provinces had any experience of Prison for Women - only seven women had served time there. Their opinion of the advantages of being in a provincial prison was, therefore, rarely based on experience. In general they have a very negative image of the Prison for Women in terms of the kinds of women there and the regime itself, although they often assumed that they would receive better treatment for medical or dental problems, and better access to programmes or earlier day parole. One woman referred to "the cold hard bitterness of women in P4W", another described relations with staff and inmates in the provincial prison as

being "douce et léger" and those at the Prison for Women as "tough" and something to be frightened of.

There were suggestions in some areas that this image was encouraged either wittingly or unwittingly by personnel in and outside the prisons. Thus in more than one instance women were shown the film 'Turning to Stone' which presents Prison for Women in a very harsh light. In other cases women appeared to have been given conflicting or wrong information about their rights, the benefits of being in the provinces or Kingston, or the ease with which they could transfer from one to the other if they changed their minds.

The contrast between the availability of programming at Kingston and in provincial institutions is highlighted in subsequent sections of this report. In general there was great ignorance among the women in provincial institutions about the possibilities - of what facilities they were entitled to, could be made or are available elsewhere. Thus it was noted that they might be pleased to be able to take educational upgrading two evenings a week, not being aware that in other prisons this might be a far more extensive and full-time programme. There was a tendency, therefore, for women in the provinces to complain rather less about the lack of programmes, and in some instances to ask for more cultural activities such as art classes or dances - although there was still an overwhelming request for work-related programmes. There is a clear need at present for more up-to-date information to be made available to all federal offenders.

The outstanding difference between the provincial experience and that of women at the Prison for Women, however, is in terms of their contact with their families. Here there was no comparison with the situation of women at Kingston. As subsequent discussion shows, for the women in the provinces, contact with their families was often on a daily basis, with phone calls and letters and two or three visits every week. In the view of the interviewer it would be a tragedy to remove these women from their families.

There were also observable differences in staff attitudes and relationships. Staff in the provinces - with the exception of one institution described by one woman as "a tough place where inmates are tough with each other and with staff" - appeared to have better relationships with the women than at Prison for Women, and uniforms were on the whole less evident. As one woman who had experience of both put it: "In [the provincial prison] it was possible to communicate with guards, male or female. In P4W if you talk to a guard you're taken for a rat."

One final issue is that of drugs. It was evident from provincial interviews that most of the institutions were 'awash with drugs'. One woman remarked that it was easier to stay off drugs on the street than on the inside, with the added pressures of being in prison. Only one or two institutions appeared to be free of illicit drug use, and in the remainder, the problem was beginning to affect other institutional policies, resulting, for example, in regular strip searches or loss of contact visits.[7]

The Limitations of Identifying Needs

Any questionnaire can be designed to provide the kinds of information required, but while these interviews were structured around a questionnaire, there was ample opportunity for the women to raise other issues, or talk in more details about particular problems they had experienced. Moreover, while the interest of the Task Force was in having some guide to the kinds of needs

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[7]. Additional discussion of provincial-federal differences will be found throughout the report, but also in the chapter on Alternatives and Choices, and Appendices I - III.

which women themselves identify and the kinds of programmes they would like to take, this cannot be seen in isolation from the experience of being in prison, or returning to the community.

To focus only on expressed needs or interests is to ignore the context in which the women spend their time. The overriding picture which emerges from the survey is of the central role which human relations plays in how they have or could be treated. Relationships with staff, the attitudes of staff and others inside and outside the prisons colour most aspects of their experiences. No amount of programming or new accommodation can compensate for the failure to treat them as human beings, as women, with respect and dignity. This view is particularly apparent in their discussion of their experience of health treatment, and in relation to such issues as disciplinary systems and decisions, security, and the training needs of staff working with women in prison, but it underlies almost all other issues and experiences.

5. CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY CONTACT

CHILDREN

There are many issues associated with the imprisonment of mothers but no existing information about how many federal women have children, how old they are, or who is caring for them. Even such simple questions do not have straightforward answers. Some women have had children who were adopted or fostered out at birth, some had children who have died, one or two have no natural children but may have fostered other people's for certain periods of their lives, or have step children. Some women in the provinces were pregnant or had just given birth and have rather different needs from those with older children, many others have young children as well as older ones, and some were themselves grandmothers.

For the prisons there is the mammoth task of trying to compensate for the disruption to family life associated with imprisonment or with the life styles and circumstances which resulted in the offending.

How many children?

Overall around two-thirds of the federal population have children, but women in the provinces were more likely to be mothers than those at P4W. Just over half of the women at P4W and threequarters of those in the provinces have at least one child (Table 1) and some have large families of four of five children (Table 2).

Table 1

Number of Women with Children*			
	Prison for Women	Province	Total
Number with at least one child	59 58 %	50 74 %	109 64 %
Number without any children	42 41 %	18 26 %	60 35 %
No information	1	-	1 1 %
Number of women	102	68	170 100 %

(*this includes only natural children who are alive)

Table 2

Number of Children Women Have		
	Prison for Women	Provinces
1	18	14
2	21	16
3	9	9
4	7	3
5	2	8
6	1	-
8	1	-
Total number of children	139	125 264

However, not all these children are now dependant upon their mothers. Some were adopted out at birth and others are adults for example. Table 3 summarizes the position by excluding women all of whose children were adopted out at birth or an early age, and have had no contact with them or any extended role in their upbringing (10 children involved). A further 7 women had at least one of their children adopted out in the same way (11 children). Finally, in the case of 20 women all their children were 17 or older. Thus a total of 81 women (48%) at P4W and in the provinces currently have children of school age or below (142 children) in whose upbringing they have had some responsibility, and 41 women (24%) have children below school age (52 children).

Table 3

Number of women still responsible for their children			
	Prison for Women	Provinces	Total
Total number with children	59 (139)*	50 (125)*	109
Total number excluding women whose children all adopted out	58 (132)	45 (121)	103
Total number with at least one child 16 or under & not adopted	44 (72)	37 (70)	81
Total number with at least one child 5 or under & not adopted	23 (26)	18 (26)	41

*number of children involved

Two thirds of all the women said they had themselves had primary responsibility for raising at least some of their children. Other children had often been brought up by their grandmother or grandparents, by their natural father, or were in foster care. Altogether 70 (64%) of the 109 women with children had been single parents either always, or for part of their children's lives.

Adoption and fostering

Even among these women custody for one or more of their children had more recently been granted to relatives, Children's Aid or social services. Often this has been a consequence of imprisonment or because of the nature of their offence, in other cases, custody had been lost because of judgements regarding their drug addiction or life style, and in a few cases at the request of the woman herself in an attempt to sort out her own life.

For a number of women this was an issue of tremendous concern. One native woman had lost custody of her three year-old child permanently having been told she was an unfit mother because of her drinking. She had not been allowed to see or have contact with her since. Another had had her three youngest children placed in white foster homes because of her alcoholism, and a third had lost custody of all her children years ago, having gone to the Children's Aid Society for help. She hoped one day to re-contact them. A few women felt they had been pressured into giving up their children to adoption when they had been depressed.

In the case of more recent adoptions or fostering, policies in relation to contact with children seemed variable, as well as relationships with foster families. Some women did not have a good relationship with foster families or had been refused contact with their child by the Children's Aid or Social services until they were 16 years old. The children of one woman had been sent to four

different foster homes following her imprisonment, ignoring her request that they remain together. Some women had difficulty contacting children fostered out following their imprisonment even when, as in one case, the court had ordered the foster parents to arrange visits. Others feared they would not regain custody from social services on release because of their life style or the nature of their offence. In a number of cases of women who had been raising children on their own, the child's father had claimed custody in their absence and against their wishes and often refused contact. For these women the chances of proving that they were fit persons to regain custody, or of doing so from prison, seem depressingly slim.

In a few cases adoption or fostering arrangements seemed to be satisfactory to the women, with open adoptions or frequent contact and sometimes at the women's own request, and some excellent arrangements had been made for one or two women in the provinces. There is, nevertheless, a clear need for legal help and advice for all those women concerned about fostering and adoption arrangements. Some had sought legal help in the past but without success. One woman had been denied legal aid to fight a custody case from inside the prison because she was from outside the province. One had legal help to fight against a ruling that she could not see her children which she had won. Many others were clearly now in need of advice and advocacy, or would need it on their release to fight to regain custody. The attitudes of the courts and Children's Aid Society workers towards 'mothers who have broken the law' or who have addiction problems can result in permanent separation that could and should be avoided. In the case of native women this is exacerbated by racial attitudes.

Who is dependant?

Given the complexity of the lives of the women and their children, there is no simple measure of the extent of dependence, but neither is dependency a one way factor. Just as children may be legally or emotionally dependant upon their mothers, the mothers are also dependant upon their children. Contact with them, news about them, being able to do things for them are of central importance to many of the women, regardless of how young or old those children may be. Thus many of the women with older children find that contact essential to their survival and their hopes for the future, and play a central part in their release plans. As one woman put it "They are my life". The importance of contact with children is in part shown by the table below which indicates that the majority of women had been living with at least one of their children prior to their current sentence (Table 4).

Table 4

Who the children were living with prior to offence		
	Prison for Women	Provinces
All grown up & live apart	2	6
At least one with her	33	25
With her & father	4	6
With ex-husband/common law	8	2
With grandparents etc.	6	6
With friend	2	1
All in care/adopted out	4	4
Total number with children	59	50

Following their mother's imprisonment, most adult children were now living on their own, and younger children were in the majority of cases being cared for by relatives - usually grandparents or grandmothers. The next most common arrangement was fostering, the remainder were with ex-husbands or ex-common-law partners and a few with friends.

Contact with children

The Provinces

There is no comparison between the provinces and P4W in terms of the extent and the quality of contact between the women and their children. In provincial prisons the majority of women had regular, often daily, contact with their children, with two or more visits a week, visiting at weekends, and in two prisons extended overnight stays or weekend stays. In one prison infants are allowed in for the day for 6-8 hours, and in another there is a room for one infant under six months to live-in.

This close and regular contact with their children was of tremendous importance to the women. As one woman with a new baby and small child, who telephoned and wrote daily, and had 3 or 4 visits a week said: "it's good to be with her, and to hold her, and to have visits with my son." Another had an excellent arrangement with the foster parents of her children who brought them to see her every week, and one phoned every day, had a contact visit every week and had 5 or 6 overnight stays in the past two years. Another had herself limit her daily calls, to allow her mother to take over daily decision-making in relation to her children.

For these women the main issues were the improvement in conditions for visiting, the lessening of security restraints, longer visiting hours including access during the day, play areas for young children and better access to overnight facilities where this was available. Those without visits included women who had only just arrived and those who were still too far from their homes without help with transport and costs, or someone to bring their children. This was particularly a

problem for native women whose children were being cared for on reserves, or for mothers with children in foster care, due to lack of resources to provide staff time and travel costs for visits. Others preferred not to have visits because it upset them, or had been refused visits by the prison or those caring for their children. The cost of out of province phone calls was also an issue of some concern.

Prison For Women

At P4W the central issue was actually to have visits. Most of the women maintained regular contact through letters and phone calls but calls were less frequent than for women in the provinces, and actual visits were rare in comparison (Table 5). Those with regular visits tended to be from nearby towns and cities. Threequarters of the women with children wanted visits, or more frequent visits with their children. Without assistance with travel costs, or transportation and accommodation for most this was out of the question, and a number of women, particularly native women, preferred a transfer back to their own province. One woman phoned her mother every week but said her children did not know who she was when she spoke to them. She felt there should be a house for mothers with children where women could do their time. Some found the infrequent visits upsetting: "the children get upset [after Family Day visits] they don't come back for a year". While access to the Little House for overnight stays was welcome, it was still infrequent, and costly for families. Others did not want their children to see them in prison and wanted earlier and more regular temporary absence passes, and weekend visits home. Many women mentioned the loss of monthly free long distance phone calls, but also the difficulties of making arrangements for long-distance calls, and having to make collect calls.

Table 5

In prison contact with children		
	Prison for Women	Provinces
Regular visits, lot of contact	9	22
Regular contact, occasional visit	3	7
Regular contact, no visits	31	12
Little or no contact	16	9
Number of women with children	59	50

Finally in relation to visiting arrangements, there is clearly a need for an established policy and funding on the part of social services and Children's Aid Societies in relation to children taken into care as a result of imprisonment, to ensure that women can see their children regularly. They should not be deprived of visits because foster families live too far away, when community liaison workers or transport could be made available.

Visiting facilities

While access was relatively good, on the whole facilities for visiting in provincial prisons were certainly not, often cramped, noisy and public. One prison regards contact visits as a privilege to

be earned, and after a set period of security visits. In another, visits take place across a long table in the gymnasium and no contact is allowed apart from a quick hug on arrival and departure, and are only open at weekends. Access to overnight facilities was only available in two prisons and in one was felt to be too restricted, and the facility expensive to equip for a weekend (compared, for example, to that at a nearby federal prison for men). In a third prison, none of the women have made use of facilities for extended family visits. They said they did not have access to them, only men at the prison. Staff on the other hand remarked that women never use them.

A second problem was that of security searches - often strip searches - which are becoming more frequent because of the staff view that there is an increasing traffic of illegal drugs into the provincial prisons, and indeed seems to have been responsible for the recent institution of across the table visits. Some women said they preferred not to have visits than submit to the indignities of constant searches.

Being a parent in prison

Because contact with their children is more regular and personal, and on the whole sentences shorter, women in the provinces felt less need for programmes concerned with child development or being a parent in prison. Older women with large families often felt they needed no advice on bringing up their families. In one prison a good programme on parenting was already in place. At P4W there was a clear need for programmes on how to develop and cope with the role of being a parent from a distance and in prison (Table 6).

Table 6

Numbers of women interested in (more) programmes about children*		
	Prison for Women	Provinces
Yes: parenting programme	07) 65 %	7) 40 %
Yes: prison parent programme	31)	13)
No: have already taken	3	2
No: children grown up	8	9
No: don't want any	16	19
Number of women with children	59	50

*some women were interested in both

As for release plans, there was some interest in being able to live in a half-way house with at least some of their children, although other women did not regard half-way houses as a suitable place for children, and for some it was unfeasible since it meant moving them from stable situations, or they lived outside Canada (Table 7).

Table 7

Would like to live with (some of) children in half-way house		
	Prison for Women	Provinces
Yes	24	16
No not a suitable place	10	7
No all grown up	12	13
No don't want to move them etc.,	13	14
Number of women with children	59	50

Finally, of relevance to some of those women without any children is the comment of one woman serving her first sentence - that she would love to have children, but will never be able to because of her life sentence.

CONTACT WITH THE COMMUNITY, FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Very few of the women were without some kind of support from family or friends outside prison, and what was most noticeable was the strength of support which many women got from their families, particularly their mothers or siblings. As with contacts with children, women in the provincial prisons had far more visits, and on the whole more regular contact than those at P4W (Table 8). Those with less than frequent contact had usually just arrived or wanted time to settle in.

Table 8

Type of contact with family and friends		
	Prison for Women	Provinces
Regular visits, lot of contact	10) 29 %	37) 75 %
Regular contact, occasional visit	20)	14)
Regular contact, no visits	55	12
Little/irregular contact	14	2
None	3	3
Number of women	102	68

In most cases letters, phone calls and visits were with family members, and rather less often with friends. One of the most satisfactory instances is that of one woman who apart from regular visits

with her family had seven socials (allowing outsiders to be invited in for the day) and four conjugal visits in the six months she had spent in the male federal penitentiary where she was currently located. At P4W, as with contact with children, the availability of the Little House or occasional Family Day cannot offset for many women the cost of long distance calls, being forced to live outside their province, and the impossibility of family members travelling from distant provinces. Native women in particular stressed that they would like to have far more visits from native Elders and leaders, as well as visits from their families.

Not all women wanted more contact with their families, however, one or two serving long sentences felt they had changed, and were not in tune with their relatives any more. And because of distance, others found the emotional strain of a visit once a year too much, and preferred not to see their family at all.

Not being able to have contact visits, either where they were not allowed to touch, or were isolated behind glass, was a source of considerable concern to a number of women. In addition, a number of women in the provinces and P4W had encountered difficulties keeping in touch with, or having visits with relatives and close friends who were or had themselves been incarcerated, or were offenders. These restrictions were felt to be unnecessarily harsh and unfair.

Finally, women from other countries or from minority ethnic groups were often multiply isolated having neither family or friends to visit, nor language in common with those around them. A number of them said they would like to have visits from community or religious leaders from communities like their own in Canada.

6. PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

Physical Health

Physical health is of major concern to almost all the women interviewed. Their loss of control over the care of their own bodies, not having access to the kinds of medication they are used to or would normally be available over a counter, or being able to consult medical staff when they feel they need to is a source of great frustration. The most central issues which arise from their experiences are the lack of access to medical treatment, the quality of that treatment, and the attitudes of staff in dealing with their requests.

"We are not respected as knowing our own bodies"

Asked whether they had any particular concerns about their health just under half the women at P4W, and over two thirds of the women in provincial prisons mentioned some concerns, or reported persistent or chronic conditions and anxieties (see Table 1). These ranged from general concerns about medical conditions such as diabetes, rashes, asthma, arthritis, weight problems, headaches and back problems, to very serious concerns such as excessive weight-loss, heart conditions, cervical cancer, gallbladder and gynaecological problems and bowel disorders. One woman reported loss of weight and hair falling out and had been waiting three weeks to see a doctor, another reported a severe internal disorder for which she was offered routine pills and anti-depressants but no proper diagnosis or tests were undertaken. Others complained of going without bowel movements for weeks but being given no specific attention. One woman reported abdominal pains for the past three years and had been awaiting an operation for the past year. Another reported vomiting for 8 months with stomach problems before she was given tests.

Table 1

Health Concerns				
	Prison for Women		Provinces	
Yes serious concerns	19)		23)	
Some concerns	27)	45 %	24)	69 %
None mentioned	56		21	
Number of women	102		68	

Two thirds of the women both in P4W and the Provinces did not think the health services adequate (Table 2). As one woman remarked "health care and emergency care are non-existent - a band-aid is the only thing you can get freely from the hospital". On the whole, those who thought the service adequate tended to make little use of it, and a few had satisfactory treatment and felt they had been well cared for. French-speaking women outside Quebec almost all referred to the difficulties of having to explain symptoms in English, or rely on guards to translate for them.

For the majority, however, the <u>maior</u> need is for better access to medical services (Table 3). Many complained of long waits to see a doctor, of having to put in notice days ahead to be seen, of needing to be an emergency case before you could be seen, and of the failure to check if treatment was working. They felt that medical services should be available every day - not just the two or three days when the doctor visited - in the evenings and at weekends. A number of women expressed serious concern about the lack of facilities for emergency treatment, others about the need to have better access to a second opinion, to specialists in outside hospitals, to different medication, to French or English-speaking medical staff. Many of the aboriginal women felt there should be native health care staff available, and wanted access or more access to their own doctor, to native elders, traditional medicine and sweetgrass, cedar, and sweats. This was the view of 13 of the 17 native women in the provinces, and 17 of the 22 at P4W.

Table 2

Is Health Care Adequate?				
	Prison for Women		Provinces	
Yes - no problems experienced	18		11	
Yes but long wait etc.,	17		11	
No	30)	62 %	17)	62 %
Definitely not	33)		25)	
Don't use it	4		4	
Number of women	102		68	

Table 3

What is needed? *		
	Prison for Women	Provinces
More access/attention/staff	62	37
Different attitudes	25	20
Native health care/staff	17	13
Access to specialists/outside hospitals	6	19
Different medication	5	14
Don't use/nothing needed	13	7

(*Some women mentioned more than one issue)

A second major issue was with the attitudes of health staff towards the women and sometimes with the quality of staff. The major complaint is that they are treated as prisoners first and women or patients second. One older woman, and a first offender, with a recurring yeast infection was told she must have been sleeping around or wore tight jeans, neither of which was true. She and others felt affronted that staff should treat them so. Many felt nursing staff to be insensitive, not to care about them, and to be paranoid that all they wanted was drugs.

Further, many complained that medical staff did not listen to them, or believe them. One woman reported periods lasted 15 days but was told by the doctor that it was 'all in her head'. A number of others reported that gynaecological problems were put down to 'nerves' by medical staff. Gall

bladder problems were diagnosed as indigestion in one case, jogging was (in that woman's view wrongly) recommended for another who had asked to see a psychiatrist for stress and nerves. Reports of misdiagnoses were not uncommon.

Access to specialist services

Better access to specialists, in particular gynaecologists, back specialists, physiotherapists, and for those concerned with gall bladder and intestinal disorders were often mentioned, and a few mentioned eating disorders, and some (in the provinces) pre- and post-natal care.

Almost everywhere the need for better dental treatment was underlined. The issues ranged from the failure to undertake proper preventive work, the tendency to extract teeth rather than carry out reconstructive work, the fact that women in the provinces did not receive free treatment as federal prisoners, and the overall lack of access to dental services. One woman reported she had not seen the dentist for two years, and had only had her teeth cleaned twice in six years; another waited 17 months to see one. One woman due out on parole had never had her front teeth replaced after years of being in prison although she had asked, and was hesitant about working as a consequence.

Access to eye specialists was also mentioned by a number of women, particularly in the provinces. Here, as with dental work, they found it expensive to pay for and felt they should be entitled to the same services available at P4W (which they assumed to be good).

"There is no proper response to pain"

The issues surrounding medication are numerous and sometimes conflicting. Women in all the prisons mentioned the difficulties of not having access to medication they were used to. Tylenol, Asprin, Atasol, were variously prescribed for pain and headaches, but not in relation to what the women would normally take outside, nor often in the strength they felt they needed.

On the other hand many women regarded the giving of pills as an avoidance of proper diagnosis or appropriate investigation. Others felt that they were denied different or any medication at all because of the prevalent view that they just wanted drugs. And the major complaint about psychiatrists was that they were pill pushers and gave too much medication.

Mental Health Care

Views on mental health care reflected many of the same concerns as with physical health. The primary problem was lack of access and very long waiting periods (Table 4), but the attitudes and approach used by various personnel, and the confidentiality of discussions were also important. The latter was particularly a problem for women in the provinces.

Much seems to depend on the characteristics of individual psychologists and psychiatrists. In one prison the psychologist was felt to be very remote ("mean, insensitive and patronizing") in two others the women obviously got on very well and reported the psychologist to be excellent. There was a lot of support for psychologists at P4W. Views on the Regional Treatment Centre were much more mixed, however, and some felt it inappropriate for women.

Nevertheless, the fact that most women reported having used the mental health services (Table 5) does not imply that needs are being met. The length of the waiting list to see the psychologist about sexual abuse issues was mentioned by many women at P4W, and women often remarked that access should not just be available at times of crisis ("you have to hurt yourself or have a

court order to see a psychiatrist"). One woman serving 25 years had never been seen, and felt that she should be at least as a preventive measure. Many of the native women both in P4W and the provinces reported that they would prefer to see a Native Elder and felt uncomfortable with non-native staff since they did not understand their culture. In the provinces visits from Elders with one notable exception were often sporadic. Francophone women outside Quebec also said they found it difficult discussing their problems or symptoms in English and wanted a French-speaking psychologist.

Drugs and over-medication

Psychiatric services came in for far more criticism, however. On the whole the view was that they were 'pill-pushers' who did not really listen or give help. Many of them appeared to be a the 'listen-then-write-a-prescription' variety. In one prison the psychiatrist was clearly unused to dealing with women who, unlike many men, want to talk. For women who felt the need to talk things through in a one-to-one relationship this was felt to be useless ("the psychiatrist writes everything down, but there's no back and forth discussion"). Another was described as handing out 'bug-juice' with such regularity that the woman would help others get off it when they noticed them bumping into doors.

The implications of going or not going to see the psychiatrist were also an issue. Some women in the provinces commented that to do so implied they were unstable. Others refused to go on the grounds that they could not get the help they needed, or that a fifteen minute session every few weeks was totally insufficient. Others only went because it was a condition of getting parole. In the provinces a number of women felt they would prefer to have a close one-to-one relationship with someone outside the prison system with whom they could talk in confidence.

A number of women in both the provinces and P4W mentioned the particular need for special programmes, or a treatment centre, for women with mental health problems, and special programmes for slashers, and for those who had been subjected to physical and sexual abuse.

Table 4

Mental Health Care		
	Prison for Women	Provinces
Good/alright	26	19
Long wait/some good - some bad	44	18
Not good	18	11
Don't know/use	12	16
Not available	-	4
No information	2	-
Number of women	102	68

Table 5

Use of Mental Health Services*		
	Prison for Women	Provinces
Psychologist	57	32
Psychiatrist	50	18
Native Elder	11	7
On waiting list	7	4
Help wanted not available	2	8
Don't use/assessment only	19	17
Number of women	102	68

*Some use more than one

General Health Care, Exercise and Diet

The need for on-going programmes about health care was raised by many women in the provinces and P4W. In a society which is so conscious of health issues, it is not surprising that many women expressed concerns about maintaining their general health and fitness. There were requests for programmes about women's health and well-being, and particularly about diet and nutrition. Many women raised the question of the provision of adequate diets, whether for diabetics or those with other special requirements, which in most cases appeared to be absent. Others felt there was not enough opportunity for exercise.

Preventive health care was also an issue, a number felt yearly check-ups were important, and regular pap smears. Some felt AIDS testing should be routine. In one institution a number of women had asked to be tested for AIDS 'to put my mind at rest' and there appeared to be an excellent AIDS programmes (information, testing and care) offered by an outside hospital. Almost all women felt it important to have more information available about AIDS, and in some cases programmes, although many felt that attendance should be up to the individual. A minority of women felt that those who tested HIV positive should be isolated from the rest of the population.

In response to a general question about their physical condition, about half the women felt they were in poorer shape than when they came in (Table 6). Many of them (43) reported putting on weight as a result of poor diet, boredom, stress and lack of exercise, others had lost weight because of depression, the stress of being inside, and eating problems. Those who felt their health had improved attributed this to a more regular regime and meals, being off drugs or alcohol, or being less depressed and 'at peace with myself'.

Table 6

Physical Condition Since Arrival		
	Prison for Women	Provinces
Generally better	26	17
No change	27	13
Worse	49	37
No information	-	1
Total of women	102	68

"Heavy, greasy and geared towards the working man"

The food everywhere was condemned as greasy, starchy and with too much fried food and tinned vegetables, by most of the women. They wanted far more fresh vegetables, fruit and salads, and more attention paid to special needs such as low calorie or diabetic diets (as well as the opportunity to take fruit out of the kitchen). A small minority were quite satisfied "Good - we had T bones last night" (she had also gained 25lbs since her arrival). A number of women reported living on peanut butter and bread, in the absence of vegetarian diets. One vegetarian did so for her first three months until she gave in and ate meat. In one prison, which had recently changed to an outside contractor, women has noticed a marked deterioration in the quality of food and the size of portions since the change.

Exercise and recreation

"the gym should be open after work every evening, and on weekends -it's a way to work out frustrations"

"the weights are ancient, there's no training....we need an exercise class, or at least a Fonda video...."

Most of the general public need encouragement to take part in exercise and sport, and the lack of facilities or opportunities to participate, coupled with little if any encouragement in the form of organized activities means that many women get scant fresh air or exercise.

Half the women in P4W made sure they took some exercise every day. In most cases this involved walking round the Yard, others used the weights in the gym. The rest of the population rarely or never took any exercise - some because they had active or outside jobs during the day, but many because they were "just lazy" or because they did not want to be involved with some of the other women. In particular the issue of equal access was raised by many women on the Wings who did not use the gym and weight room because they were dominated by those from the Ranges. Women who were serving sentences for child-related offenses were especially restricted.

Many women thought there should be more Yard time in winter as well as summer, more access to the gym including the weekends, and far more organization of activities by recreation officers

(leading classes in the gym, organizing exercise routines, running baseball or volleyball or team sports on a regular basis) and those from outside. They were anxious to have more team sports and field days organized which appeared very popular; other suggestions included swimming and bowling passes, skating, and long walks outside.

Among the women in the provinces, the lack of fresh air and access to the outside or to adequate exercise facilities was seen as one of the major reasons why their general health had deteriorated. With one exception there was little variation in the availability of exercise facilities or the time allotted. Most prisons allowed 45 minutes a day for exercise, although often this became half an hour. One prison allowed occasional access to a small concrete yard for 45 minutes when at least 5 women wanted to go out and there were staff available. Another allowed women out for 45 minutes a day into a small compound, and indoor facilities amounted to a small room with one exercise bicycle. And one made longer access to the compound a privilege for certain longer-term women. In more than one prison the choice had to be between use of the gym or the Yard, and a minimum number of women was usually required.

The one exception was a co-correctional prison where there was free time for sports, recreation and outside activities in the gym and grounds from 4.0 to 7.0 pm every day. A particular problem for women in co-correctional prisons, however, was that they sometimes felt inhibited from using the gym or weight room by the presence of men. Again many women in the provinces felt the need for the organization of activities.

7. DRUG AND ALCOHOL EXPERIENCE

The Involvement of Addiction in Offending

It is often acknowledged that drugs and alcohol play a large part in the lives of many women involved in the criminal justice system. Among the current population, while few have actually been convicted of drug or alcohol offenses, for almost threequarters drugs or alcohol have played a major part in their lives (Table 1). In many cases they are addicted, often heavily, and have been addicted for long periods of their lives. One said she had begun drinking at the age of 9 and taking drugs from 13 years of age, another started drinking on a daily basis at the age of 12, and taking drugs daily at 13, and one described herself as a heroin addicted for the past 23 years. And among those addicted to alcohol was a woman who described herself as being "on a twenty year drunk".

Not all women were so heavily involved. Some said they had been addicted in the past, or had experimented with drugs but that they were no longer a problem. One or two had now come to realize that they had been addicted to prescription drugs or alcohol prior to their offence although they had never perceived it to be problem before. One woman said she had been introduced to drugs in prison and that they were easier to get there than on the street.

Table 1

Experience with drugs and alcohol				
	Prison for Women		Provinces	
Addicted/prolonged use drugs only	27		24	
Addicted/prolonged use alcohol only	16		11	
Addicted/prolonged use of both	18		13	
Experimented/not addicted now	11		1	
Sells drugs but does not use	4		1	
Does not use/social drinker only	26	(25 %)	18	(26 %)
Number of women	102		68	

The substances taken ranged from prescription pills such as Valium, Librium, Halicon, Talwin and Ritalin, and Demeral, taken both legally and illegally, to marijuana, and methadone, morphine, cocaine, and heroin. For a number of women, the mixing of drugs and alcohol was clearly a precipitating factor in their offending. The extent to which they regarded their drug and alcohol experience as related to their offending behaviour is shown below (Table 2).

Table 2

Involvement of drugs or alcohol in offending		
	Prison for Women	Provinces
In for drug offenses only	8	8
Offenses to support habit only	8	6
Offenses under the influence	35	21
Mixture of above	19	15
Not involved in offending	9	4
Not applicable don't use	23	14
Nomber of women	102	68

Altogether, 120 women (71%) said drugs or alcohol were a factor in their offending. Of these 89 said they offended under their influence, 40 to support their habit, and 45 were convicted of drug

offenses (trafficking, possession etc). Many women saw addiction as the main reason for their offending, others said it was one factor, but not the main reason.

The Native Experience

Among the 39 native women involvement in substance abuse was even greater, 10 were addicted to drugs, 12 to alcohol and 12 to both, and three women said they did not use them, or had experimented only. Most women were heavily addicted over long periods, 10, 20, 25 years often growing up in alcoholic environments. A number said they blacked out after drinking. They had not found the criminal justice system sympathetic. One had been called 'a wino and lysol drinker' in court, neither of which was correct, but no objections were made on her behalf. Another had been told by her parole officer to seek treatment but was offered no assistance to do so, being told "I don't like natives". Many felt they had been unable to find the support or treatment they needed to help deal with the problems in their lives.

Experience of Addiction Programmes

Almost all those women who regard substance abuse as a problem have at some stage of their lives taken some part in treatment programmes either before coming to prison, or during their current sentence. Only 9 women with an alcohol problem had never attended any treatment programme, and 10 with a drug problem - most of these in provincial prisons. The extent of that treatment, however, cannot be judged, and in some cases it would appear fairly superficial. Certainly what goes under the heading of a programme in some prisons did not amount to very much ("AA comes in once in a Blue Moon") some had no drug programmes to speak of, or nothing in the language of their choice. In some cases lack of a suitable programme outside prison had delayed parole.

Most of the programmes available involved AA or NA, and had been taken in prison, but a number of women had previously attended residential programmes in the provinces, sometimes at the start of their sentence, or group or individual treatment programmes at hospitals and clinics. Those in P4W had usually attended one or more of a range of programmes from AA to New Women in Sobriety, Seven Steps and the Brentwood programme, as well as individual counselling.

On the whole the majority of women had found programmes taken helpful, although less so in the provinces, but there are clearly problems concerned with taking programmes inside the prison. There were a number of women who felt that attendance at group programmes such as AA was not taken seriously by others, particularly if it was part of an attempt to improve chances for parole: "not so good in prison because women simply go through the motions". Secondly, response to AA and NA groups varied considerably, probably in part because of this factor, but also because of the variability of group leaders. Nor was the Christian basis of such programmes acceptable to a number of women whether native or non-native. Several women in provincial prisons, nevertheless, had good relations with NA sponsors they intended to work with on release. On the whole response to other programmes at P4W was good.

Some of the most enthusiastic responses to addiction programmes came from women who were involved in the Brentwood intensive group programme at P4W. The programme started not long before interviews took place, and a sizeable proportion of the population at the prison were currently involved in it. (It was at times difficult to arrange interviews with women who did not want to miss a particular session). They were concerned to explain that it was a total programme and dealt with everything, your whole life, not just addictions, and they were enthusiastic about both the group sharing experience and the follow-up on release. It would seem that this was the first experience many of the women had had of a total intensive group programme in a prison

setting - i.e. all day five days a week - so that their response might be the same with other programmes run on similar lines.[8] Nevertheless, not all women found the confrontational aspects of the programme helpful, and native women in particular said they would prefer access to programmes run by native counsellors.

Programmes wanted

Guided by past experience of addiction programmes, a number of women felt they needed longer or residential programmes (Table 3). At P4W this referred primarily to Brentwood, in the provinces often to 28 day programmes run in the community outside. Others wanted to continue group programmes they had already taken (usually AA and NA) although often specifying they need better leaders and "people who have been in it themselves, not just text-book facilitators".

Table 3

Types of addiction programme needed*		
	Prison for Women	Provinces
Longer, residential programmes	15	8
Better group programmes	14	18
Individual counselling	9	4
Native based	14	10
Other	11	1
Do not want further programmes	11	4
Not applicable - no addictions	31	23

*some mentioned more than one type

There was a very clear need for native based programmes both inside and outside prison. Other requests were for programmes in French for francophones outside Quebec, and in English for those not fluent in French in Quebec. There were requests for programmes dealing with addiction to prescription drugs and street drugs, and programmes bringing together drunk drivers and families of victims.

Many women specified that they only wanted to take further programmes outside prison "where everyone is serious", others wanted programmes they could control themselves and where

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[8]. It is of interest whether the Brentwood programme is necessarily appropriate for all women, given that it is based on a model developed with men. Other programmes designed for women such as that run by Jean Tweed in Toronto might be more appropriate.

attendance was not a condition of parole or to meet institutional expectations. It was clear that a number of women with addiction problems 'go through the motions' of attending programmes without any real commitment. It was also clear that others who felt they had dealt with their addiction, or that they had never had any addiction problem were still expected to take part in programmes. Thus women want the choice to take or not to take programmes, as well as a choice of programmes available to them.

8. PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL ABUSE

Many people who work closely with women in conflict with the law have recognized the high incidence of physical and sexual abuse among them. Like substance abuse, it often has links with many aspects of women's life-style and with their offending. The beginnings of programmes and counselling to help women deal with their experiences are in evidence, but nowhere extensive. It seems essential to assess the extent to which women in the federal population express an interest in such programmes, as well as how far existing programmes meet with their expectations.

Given that abuse has become a topic of public discussion, and that some work has been done in this area with women at P4W, it is perhaps easier for women to talk about than might have been the case several years ago. Certainly only two women refused to talk about this issue, and overall, interviewers found that women were quite willing to discuss it, and some were very open and frank. It must be acknowledged, nevertheless, that it is impossible on the basis of this kind of information to gauge how serious the impact of any abuse is on individual woman. Infrequent abuse may be just as damaging to one woman as prolonged abuse to another, and the figures given below can only be regarded as a rough guide to the extent of the problem. Also to be taken into account is that many women do not remember abuse, or are not willing to speak openly about it until they feel conditions are right.

Overall 68% (115) of the population interviewed said they had been physically abused at some stage of their lives, and rather more of them at P4W than in the provinces (Table 1). This ranged from occasional beatings in childhood "for discipline purposes", to violent adult experiences such as that of a woman who had her teeth kicked out and lost the sight of one eye, and another who was subjected to 19 years of marital abuse.

Table 1

Number who have been physically abused			
	Prison for Women	Provinces	Total
Regularly over a long period	42	32	74
Regularly over a shorter period	20	6	26
Once or twice	10	5	15
Total number abused	72 (71 %)	43 (63 %)	115 68 %
Never abused	29	24	53
No information	1	1	2
Number of women	102	68	170

Many of these women had been regularly abused for long periods of their lives, throughout childhood and adolescence by parents, other relatives or foster parents, training school staff, and in adolescence and adulthood by acquaintances, boy-friends, husbands and common law partners. When asked how often they had been physically abused they would remark "regularly for 14 years", "all through my childhood", "all my life regularly", "three times a week from childhood to late twenties". Others said they had been abused for shorter periods, often during a relationship in adolescence or as adults.

A total of 90 women (53% of the population interviewed) said they had been sexually abused at some stage in their lives, and there was little variation between P4W and the provincial prisons (Table 2).

Table 2

Number who have been sexually abused			
	Prison for Women	Provinces	Total
Regularly over a long period	22	16	38
Several times	12	7	19
Once or twice	23	10	33
Total number abused	57 (56 %)	33 (49 %)	90 (53 %)
Never abused	44	34	78
No information	1	1	2
Number of women	102	68	170

Again some women had been subjected to sexual abuse, often in association with physical abuse, throughout childhood and adolescence - "every two weeks from 8 to 14 years of age" - by fathers, or step or foster fathers, brothers, uncles, grandfathers or family friends. For others it was an occasional occurrence, often involving someone they knew. Again, the impact of a single rape, the experience of gang-rape, or incest cannot be measured by these figures, but they underline the widespread nature of sexual abuse among the women. And it is clear from the offenses which many of the women committed, that abuse has played a large part in their offending. Many of those serving sentences for manslaughter or murder, as well as others, had been involved in abusive relationships, some for many years.

Overall it is possible to say, therefore, that 82% (84) of the women in P4W had been either physically or sexually abused and 72% (49) of those in the provinces.

The aboriginal population

One of the most crucial factors about abuse, however, is that it plays a far more widespread part in the lives of native women. For these women, due both to experiences on reserves and vulnerability coming into cities offering no work or shelter, physical abuse was almost total, and

sexual abuse more common than among the non-native women. And it is these women who most often had been subjected to constant and regular abuse for various stages of their lives (Table 3). Among the native women in the provinces there were rather fewer who said they had been sexually abused than at P4W, but it is not possible to conclude whether this reflected their experience, or was because they had not had the benefit of the kinds of programmes recently started at P4W, and were unable to talk about it.

Table 3

Abuse among the native population		
	Natives	Non-native
Number who have been physically abused	35 (90 %)	80 (61 %)
Not physically abused	3	
No information	1	
Number of women	39	
Number who have been sexually abused	24 (61 %)	65 (50 %)
Not sexually abused	14	
No information	1	
Number of women	39	131

Programmes and counselling

"It's fantastic being able to speak - it made me grow"

A number of women said that they had at some time taken part in a programme of counselling concerned with physical or sexual abuse (Table 4). At P4W the great majority of these had been taken in prison (41), in the provinces, both outside and in. Among the women at P4W there was a great deal of support for the work being undertaken by the therapist specialising in abuse, and recent sessions for natives on sexual and physical abuse. Many women mentioned the long waiting list to see the specialist therapist. Others had counselling with the psychologist, or had spent time dealing in some way with the issues in the Brentwood intensive group programme. What they had to say about the experience of all these sessions was always positive: "I feel I've learned to deal with the problems and I can talk about it now", "it helped to get rid of the aggressiveness inside me".

Table 4

Number who had taken programmes or counselling about abuse		
	Prison for Women	Provinces
Yes have/are taking	48 57 %	18 37 %
Not taken any	35	29
No information	1	2
Total number mentioning abuse	84	49

In the provinces, this involvement had primarily been in terms of talking with psychologists or psychiatrists either in prison or previously. Some had talked to the Deacon, one or two had tried the women's shelter. On the whole, however, there seemed little specifically set up to deal with these issues. One woman in fact complained that when she asked for some help she was given a book to read about abuse. In her view this was inappropriate "I need a female one-to-one [counsellor] who is aware of sexual abuse, or a group".

Given the comments made by many provincial women about psychiatric and psychological services in their prison, that they did not feel they treated what the women said as confidential, and that there was not time to talk at length about issues, there seems a clear need for the development of programmes specifically concerned with physical and sexual abuse. As one woman in the provinces put it, there is a need for "a lot more one-to-one counselling to get to the roots of the problem, not just superficial meetings with psychiatrists". This also points to the need for more female psychologists specializing in abuse such as those at P4W.

What kinds of programmes?

The fact that a number of women have already taken part in some programme or counselling should not be taken to imply that everything is already in place, or that those women need no more assistance. Certainly some of the counselling sessions taken by women in provincial prisons cannot be regarded as programmes in this regard. In addition, a short session lasting a few weeks and run once a year when funds are available is not necessarily going to help those women who find it difficult to take part at that stage. Not all women want group programmes initially either. One complained that groups were not confidential and preferred individual counselling, while others found the sharing of experiences in the group, and the realization that they were not alone of great help.

The extent to which women felt the need for programmes on abuse is shown below (Table 5). Around two-thirds of them felt they wanted to take part. On the whole it was felt that group programmes should be run by community workers and not prison staff, with a greater assurance of confidentiality, and community assistance on release.

Table 5

Types of programmes or counselling on abuse wanted*		
	Prison for Women	Provinces
Individual programme	28	28
Groups programme	17	3
Native programme	12	3
None wanted now	32 (39 %)	18 (37 %)
No information	9	3
Total number mentioning abuse	84	49

*some mentioned more than one

A number of women pointed out that there was a need for programmes specifically about physical abuse. Some suggested a self-support group for women who were victims of sexual and physical abuse. There was also a need for programmes for french-speaking women, and an obvious need for programmes specifically geared to native women, and with Native Elders.

A question of choice

A second important factor about programmes concerned with abuse is that not all women do want to take them. Among those who did not want programmes (around one third) were a number who felt they had come to terms with the problem and dealt with it, others who definitely did not want to take a programme within the prison, and those who just did not wish to become involved. This raises the important issue of choice, and the extent to which women should be pressured to undertake programmes as a condition of their sentence or release plans, a point made by a number of women in relation to other issues such as addiction or psychiatric counselling, as well as in relation to abuse programmes.

It must also be recognized that the effects of abusive experiences are not fully understood and greatly underestimated in society, and may be related to a range of other aspects of the lives of the women, including their offending behaviour, their potential for violence, their addictions, their self esteem, or ability to function generally in society, and that programming in relation to abuse should not be perceived as an isolated issue. That this is not clear to all those currently working with the women was illustrated by a staff comment about one woman whose offence was directly linked to her abuse, that she "seemed obsessed as a multiple rape victim".

The importance of staff training on the nature and effects of abuse cannot be underestimated - as subsequent sections of this report point out - in enabling those working closely with the women to understand their behaviour and experiences more clearly.

9. WORK AND TRAINING

A major concern of the Federal population centres around work and the acquisition of skills was to earn a reasonable wage on release from prison. It is of little surprise that the great majority of women in the population did not have any extensive training or educational qualifications beyond basic school leaving requirements - and many of them not even these - prior to their entry into prison (Table 1). Aboriginal women were at an even greater disadvantage in that only one had any training beyond basic education, and a number had dropped out of grade school very early or never attended.

Most women had worked at low-paying jobs in shops and offices, bars and restaurants, as nursing aides or child care workers, or at unskilled manual work. (Nevertheless, the absence of 'official' skills should not always be taken to imply that all women are without job experience and sometimes considerable organizational abilities). Many women had worked in a variety of jobs. A small number of women in both the provinces and at P4W had received technical and higher education of some kind giving them skills ranging from hairdressing, nursing, carpentry, landscaping, to real estate, accountancy and business management, and several of the women had managed their own businesses.

While around a third of the population had always worked, the rest had often been unemployed when they wanted work, or never had a 'legitimate' job, either because they had been supported by husbands or common-law partners, lived off welfare and child benefit payments or worked 'illegitimately' (Table 2).

Table 1

Educational level prior to prison			
	Prison for Women	Provinces	Total
Basic education or below	75	45	120 71 %
On the job training	5	1	6 4 %
Technical training	11	8	19 11 %
Higher education (college/university)	11	14	25 15 %
Number of women	102	68	170 100 %

Table 2

Work history			
	Prison for Women	Provinces	Total
Usually worked	35	30	65 38 %
Sometimes/often unemployed when wanted work	48	22	70 41 %
Illegal jobs only	16	11	27 16 %
Never worked (housewife/student)	3	5	8 5 %
Number of women	102	68	170 100 %

Working in prison

Most women were employed for at least part of the day on work around the prison when not attending school or training courses, or in hospital or segregation. In almost all cases little skill or training is required for the endless cleaning, laundry, kitchen or grass cutting tasks involved. Jobs in some provincial prisons were somewhat sparse even so, and those that depended on contracts from outside intermittent. In most cases, however, where women have particular skills or interests (e.g., in printing, pottery, carpentry, accountancy, business management, nutrition, computers, nursing) there seems little attempt to make use of their talents within the prison. Only one or two were involved in teaching others individual skills.

At P4W and some provincial prisons the range of jobs undertaken by women is marginally wider, with the possibility of working in clerical or other capacities with individual departments (e.g., school clerk, library assistant, social development) or editorial work on Tightwire, but these jobs are few and far between.

Pay scales varied considerably, women in one prison could earn around $2 to $3 or more an hour on contract work when it was available, depending on the speed at which they work, and another paid $4.50 an hour for some work. Elsewhere, however, it ranged from $1.90 a day for sweeping the floors to $9.00 a day for a 12 shift in the kitchen. Most earned around $4 or $5 a day for routine prison jobs. Pay scales were a source of concern to many, and have failed to keep pace with rising costs of canteen goods, or to take account of recent increases in the price of cigarettes and tobacco. Some noted that men in their provincial system are paid more for the same work than women (e.g., men got $9.00 to work in the kitchen, compared with $7.00 for women).

Learning workable skills in prison

Perhaps the major advantage of being under federal rather than provincial jurisdiction is the availability of educational and work skills training. Since arriving in prison, either for the current sentence or previously, many women at P4W had undertaken basic educational upgrading, post secondary or university courses, begun apprenticeship courses, or taken a vocational training course of some kind. In the provinces, however, while many women had attended school at least

part time, the lack of access to educational programmes beyond basic upgrading, or to vocational training programmes was everywhere apparent.

Education

Since arriving around 86% of women at P4W had spent time in school, and 65% of those in provincial prisons, although generally for shorter periods during the week (Table 3). Part of this difference is probably accounted for by the shorter sentences of women in the provincial prisons which meant they had less time to start school than those in P4W. Some had indeed arrived recently, were waiting the arrival of a teacher, or were on the waiting list (here the school room was too small to take more than an allotted number of women). Others had been told they could not, or did not need to attend (e.g., not eligible because of federal status, or because the school room had no bars). Some said they wanted skills training rather than education. Some had completed basic upgrading on previous sentences and wanted more advanced courses which were not available.

Table 3

Number of women who have attended school*		
	Prison for Women	Provinces
Are attending/have attended	88 86 %	44 65 %
Not attended school	14	24
Number of women	102	68

*during the current sentence

On the whole those who had followed courses has found them helpful, one or two women were now literate, others had completed basic school leaving requirements, but the main comment was in terms of the need for far more courses to be made available in a wider range of subjects (e.g., literature, languages, physical sciences, social sciences, native studies, women's studies, business management) and for more help to be given to individual woman to locate and apply for external correspondence courses ("in the beginning I was given no help whatsoever"; "wrote myself to universities about courses"). Access to courses in their own language was also a problem for women in several prisons, and seemingly impossible in cases where a small minority did not constitute the minimum 15 women required to start a course. They also felt there was a problem of equivalences, and having to start grades over again because of their language.

The Provinces

It is a source of some concern that little incentive is offered to women in provincial prisons to attend school or undertake educational courses by correspondence. One prison does not pay for attendance at all, (although classes are only available two days a week) and a number of women would have liked to study further if they could be paid. Elsewhere pay scales for attending school are very low (e.g., $2) compared with the average $4 or $5 dollars a day for jobs within the prison,

and this is a real disincentive for those who smoke or want to build up their savings. An additional disadvantage is that for women arriving in late spring, no classes may be available throughout the summer months.

While most women had attended school, it was primarily for educational upgrading in English, French, or maths. Many women wanted access to a wider range of subjects, and to courses beyond secondary level such as college or university courses. Women in the provinces also seem generally unaware of the extent to which courses are made available elsewhere, or their rights to financial assistance towards the cost of correspondence courses. Thus some women were pleased to be able take basic educational upgrading two evenings a week, and native women in particular seemed unaware of the possibilities for financial help with the exception of one native woman who had successfully completed a University level course with federal funds. Other women, on the other hand, were aware of the possibilities, but they had experienced considerable problems getting information or financial aid. One had payed a deposit of $25 dollars to enrol for a correspondence course only to learn that there was no money left for the year to pay for course costs. Several others mentioned the same problem of a lack of funds for external courses, or lack of response from Correctional Service Canada (CSC) to funding requests. One had fought to pay for courses with her own money.

In addition, in some prisons daily work schedules were long, in one case they worked 12 hour shifts but the women found themselves too tired to study in the evenings. The outstanding exception to this general pattern - and to that at P4W - was the experience of the woman housed in a federal men's prison where teachers from the nearby university came in daily to run a variety of courses.

Prison for Women

At P4W those who had taken upgrading often found it repetitive and not of great use. ("School is Mickey Mouse, people don't go there to learn"; "teachers give no individual attention"; "I didn't finish, I hate school, I want something like construction, something more masculine"). Those taking post secondary courses were rather more satisfied. One in particular had discovered that she was capable of taking university level courses, having never gone beyond Grade 10 basic education previously, and her self-confidence was considerably raised. Nevertheless, there were considerable complaints about the lack of up-to-date equipment particularly computers, about the need for longer and more thorough courses and more teachers.

The difficulties of undertaking university courses at Collin's Bay men's institution, because of the restriction on the numbers of women, their security level, and transport problems was also raised, while those without Canadian citizenship were denied university courses. Many women stressed the need for more advanced courses, particularly in computing, which was regarded by some as "a joke", and the equipment very outdated. The present course was restricted to wordprocessing rather than programming. Women who spent most of their time in segregation found it particularly difficult to get assistance, although some working at a higher level felt they were lucky to be able to rely on outside tutors. They also felt they should be paid to study as others were. One or two women had their desire to attend school questioned by staff who thought they were escape risks.

Vocational training

"We need entire post-secondary courses leading to certificates - not just random courses."

A far bigger discrepancy between provincial prisons and P4W relates to the availability of vocational training. As shown below (Table 4) 52 (51%) of the women at P4W had taken or were

currently taking vocational training programmes, compared with only 13 women (19%) in the provinces.

Most Provincial women said they had taken no programmes or none were available. One prison provides a hairdressing course, as does P4W, but only two women are taken on at a time, and a qualification requires additional training in the community after leaving prison. One other prison has a hairdressing course but none of the women had taken it.

In co-correctional prisons workshops for carpentry, bricklaying, and mechanics existed but none of the women had taken part, and some staff commented that they were not encouraged to do so since it was difficult for women to break into the male-dominated trades outside the prison. One woman with some prior experience in the field had been denied access to a masonry course because she was female. Elsewhere short three-day courses in First Aid or Cardiac Pulmonary Resuscitation are available, and a longer dog handling course (though only for three women at a time) but otherwise no vocational training is offered. One woman concerned with the lack of opportunities for training made the reasonable suggestion that women should be allowed to take courses at the nearby male prison.

Table 4

Vocational training programmes taken in prison		
	Prison for Women	Provinces
Have taken - good, useful	24)	6)
Taken - don't know if useful	8) 51 %	7) 19 %
Taken - not useful/no good	20)	-)
Not taken any	50	37
None available	-	18
Number of women	102	68

At P4W the most successful training programme appears to be the Bath Institution microfilm course. Almost all those who had taken it had found it useful and interesting, although as others pointed out it was only available to those designated minimum security. A number of women now wanted to develop their computing skills further with advanced training. Otherwise there was a general view that courses did not go far enough to provide certified skills, eg. industrial sewing, electrician, hairdressing, carpentry, printing. As some pointed out certain courses did not really amount to programmes as such - "just a man coming in for four weeks, not enough or sophisticated enough, it takes 3-4 years to get your papers." Others felt that as apprentices or on training courses they did little more than carry tools around or change light bulbs, and had little real training or opportunity to complete the required number of hours. Some felt exploited at times, putting in long hours with little gain in terms of credits.

Training courses needed

"...something marketable...we just don't go out and become good little housewives...we do what we need to do to survive..."

What is very clear is that almost all women are concerned to acquire workable training skills, whether through school or training courses or both. This view comes through repeatedly in their discussion of their experiences of courses taken, or needed, and their work plans for release. Thus four-fifths of all federal women wanted to take, or to take further vocational training courses (Table 5) or school courses, and the kinds of subjects they wanted to study were invariably realistic and marketable. Those not interested included those due out soon, nearing retirement, those who had taken courses with which they were satisfied, or who planned to get married or care for their children on release.

Table 5

Type of courses would like to take		
	Prison for Women	Provinces
Workable training skills	17	13
Advanced skills especially computing	22	3
Skilled trades	21	12
Social work training*	10	8
Other school, university courses*	6	12
Other	6	5
None/don't know	20 (20 %)	15 (22 %)
Number of women	102	68

*other women also wanted more educational courses, these were woman who wanted educational courses rather than specific trade courses.

Workable training skills included such things as office skills and business training, basic training in computers and word processing, lab technician, hairdressing, library work, art and design. Advanced skills were requested repeatedly at P4W in computing, but also in such areas as photography, drafting, printing, carpentry. Skilled trades included catering (butchery, chef, patisserie, commercial cooking) carpentry, mechanics, car body, construction, welding, masonry, heavy goods driving, and sewing. Some women already had experience in these fields, and wanted to gain or complete their trade certificates. Thus there was an obvious demand for non-traditional female skills, as well as traditional ones. Many women liked to work outdoors doing joinery and woodwork, had worked on construction sites or in car repair shops, or had done landscape work or forestry.

The other outstanding feature was the high proportion of women who wanted to obtain qualifications or work towards a job in social work of some kind. Around a third of all the women wanted to work with ex-offenders, with young people in trouble, doing addiction or abuse counselling, working with native people in trouble, in child care or with old people. Many of these women felt they had personal experience to share, but also wanted to study social work, sociology, child development, native court work, addictions and counselling. Only 3 women said they did not want a paid job when they left prison but would return to looking after their children, and 16 did not know what they would do on release. Very few wanted to return to the kinds of unskilled jobs such as waitressing, cleaning or factory work which they had experienced before.

What the women want are marketable skills with qualifications and certificates - and help getting a job.

10. DOING TIME: PROGRAMME CHOICES

"[We need] skills towards future work, courses towards helping others, full-time school, hairdressing computers, business accounting, upgrading, group discussion, serious drug and alcohol programmes."

The need for varying kinds of programmes has been discussed in a number of places in this report, this section covers other types of programmes and the overall importance which the women place on particular courses. 'Programme' is a compact and definite sounding term, but many of the initiatives which come under that heading do not always match up to that image. They range from on-going training sessions or intensive full-day courses over a number of months, to occasional one day or one-off sessions about a particular topic.

Programmes taken

It seemed important, nevertheless, for future planning to gauge interest in the range of programmes which are thought to be helpful to women offenders as well assessing how far the federal population have taken part in such programmes already, (in addition to programmes on abuse, addiction or work and education discussed elsewhere). It is difficult to get an accurate picture of when or where courses have been taken (women in provincial prisons tended to give more precise answers) but a rough guide is provided by Table 1 below. In addition since women are at varying stages of their sentence, not all will have had an opportunity to take courses available (e.g., pre-release courses). In other cases courses may only be provided on an intermittent basis. As might be expected, nevertheless, women at P4W are more likely to have taken part in a variety of programmes since more are available there than in provincial prisons.

Table 1

Number of women who have taken programmes		
	Prison for Women	Provinces
Life skills	33	25
Social/Communication skills	8	9
Spiritual	34	22
Cultural	18	16
Health*	24	5
Legal Matters	7	4
Money**	12	10
Long-term	-	5
Parenting	17	7
Pre-release	16	9
Work release	5	8
Number of women	102	68

* mainly a one-day seminar on AIDS
**usually part of life-skills

The response to courses taken was generally favourable, particularly in relation to life skills, social skills, parenting and pre-release, although people often felt courses were too short, and should cover issues in more depth over a longer period. Some found them superficial or too 'middle-class'("...inadequate for the situation, the facilitators are not qualified"). One life-skills course was felt to treat them 'like children', and several felt that at P4W needed up-dating "no good - the standard male format", while coverage of budgeting and money issues was often felt to be inadequate in life-skills. Some suggested that women should be given different levels of courses according to their needs.

Spiritual and cultural courses were interpreted differently across the prisons. In P4W they included Native spiritual and cultural programmes, as well as discussions with Priests, Chaplains or Deacons, or attendance at services. Some of those in the provinces interpreted cultural courses to include dances and Bingo, art and drama. In most cases those who said they had taken course relating to money and budgeting, legal issues or health and well-being referred to one-off seminars on AIDS and participation in the Queen's University Community Law Project at P4W, or had dealt with budgeting issues within life-skills courses. The five women in the provinces who said they had taken a course on being a long-term offender referred to one-to-one sessions with the psychologist.

Programmes women want

"on-going, solid programmes"
"better orientation to the realities of prison life"
"hands-on training to get into the community...[you] become socially retarded"
"pre-release that focuses on reality"
"more integration with the community, at least before five years"
"work release earlier in [your] sentence for long-termers"
"children to live in two months before release"
"more marketable skills"

Which of these courses would women want to take if they were available? Again much will depend on the stage of sentence reached, as well as the stage of life you have reached, and the figures below provide only a rough indication of interest (see Table 2). What is very evident - and reinforces previous discussion of work programmes - is the importance to the great majority of women of work release and pre-release programmes, but there is also a clearly expressed interest in programmes providing legal help and advice, programmes about women's health and well-being (particularly nutrition) and coping with a long-term sentence.

Table 2

Numbers of women who would like to take programmes			
	Prison for Women	Provinces	Total
Life skills	33	34	67 39 %
Social/communication skills	33	31	64 38 %
Spiritual programmes	33	28	61 36 %
Cultural programmes	26	37	63 37 %
Women health & well-being etc.	52	43	95 56 %
Legal help & advice	65	43	108 64 %
Budgeting, taxes, managing money	39	29	68 40 %
Coping with a long-term sentence	46	36	82 48 %
Parenting/child development etc.	43	21	64 38 %
Pre-release	50	48	98 58 %
Work release	73	50	123 73 %
Number of women	102	68	170

The need for legal programmes seemed to be both for advice and help with personal problems as well as more general programmes about women and the law. The development of programmes for those with long sentences, was identified as an important area, particularly -although not only - at the beginning of a sentence. A number of women also emphasised that programmes, and especially pre-release ones, should be run by people from the community outside the prison, rather than by prison staff.

The central place of working skills and training is also underlined by their responses to a question about which of all the kinds of programmes discussed they felt were of most importance to them (Table 3).

Table 3

Most important programmes for you*		
	Prison for Women	Provinces
Education	14	5
Job skills/work training	21	25
Abuse/addiction treatment	16	1
Getting life/community skills	17	14
Native programmes	13	8
Other	20	16
All important	7	1
No information	3	4
Number of women	102	65

*Some chose more than one

Other programmes mentioned included spiritual ones and minority religions, programmes in one's own language (French, English, Chinese) and interests such as drama, painting, design and sculpture, music, dancing, pottery, or relaxation programmes.

A final issue, but one which arose in discussion with women at various times was that of access to programmes for women in segregation. This was a problem largely, though not exclusively, for women at P4W. A number of women, some serving very long sentences, in segregation for their own protection because of their offence, did not have access to programmes because they felt they could not participate. Others, in segregation because they were felt to be in need of close attention, or for punitive reasons, were similarly deprived of access to programmes and recreational facilities. While some of these women have chosen to study on their own, not all women have the

necessary skills and motivation, nor can they undertake work training or take part in courses which might well be of benefit to them, and this clearly presents a problem for them. The position of such women needs to be confronted.

11. DISCIPLINE, PUNISHMENT AND REDRESS

"You are always going to have arguments....women are packed like sardines...they expect us to get along in harmony"

"Rules vary from day to day" ; "change of shift, change of rules"

"Seventy percent of rules are petty"

"..the last few [decisions] were very fair, but some are outrageous - 14 days for having a toe in another cell, 10 days for flicking hair....it's impossible to defend yourself against [such] charges"

"[discipline] is not appropriate for those charged with drugs - get help to them, not just shift them to another jail, segregation is not a solution at all"

Tension, stress, boredom, lack of things to do, petty charges, lockdowns, drugs, jealousies, are all part of the experience of imprisonment. Getting on with other inmates or with staff is never easy under cramped conditions, and where one group is always in a position of authority over another. The response to rule-breaking or to behaviour judged inappropriate is punishment.

The great majority of women at P4W and in provincial prisons felt there were far too many rules, too vaguely defined, and that the most of them were petty e.g., for running not walking, for holding up the count, for taking fruit out of the kitchen, for having a toe in someone's room. As one woman put it "[the disciplinary system] is hysterical - I wouldn't impose some of these rules in a nursery school". Secondly, the application of rules was felt to be totally inconsistent both from day to day, and person to person.

Where charges resulted in an appearance before a disciplinary court most felt that the decisions were similarly very inconsistent ("punishment depends on who you are") and given the trivial nature of many charges, the sanctions too heavy:

> "segregation for everything"
>
> "too heavy, they use segregation for the wrong people"
> "selective in punishing"
>
> "it's stupid - they make mountains out of rubbish"
>
> "native women [get] 10 days in seg., for swearing, white women 3 days - shouldn't be inside courts"
>
> "harder on some than others...outspoken inmates are treated worse".

<u>The need for clearer guidelines, less discretion and alternative approaches</u>

Many women suggested there should be a clear list of rules set down and given to each woman on arrival to reduce the scope for arbitrary decisions, and that there should be fewer of them. In

some provincial prisons the scope for rule infraction was considerably extended by no-touching rules (and sometimes both body contact and body language):

> "You have the disciplinary board passing judgment on whether women should hold hands. It's none of their business. They are totally out of line."

For women in co-correctional prisons as well as others this seemed unnecessarily harsh and difficult to adhere too, and the relatively greater freedom of contact at P4W was felt to be far preferable. Such rules were regarded as particularly discriminatory against women with lesbian relationships, but also difficult for others who cannot show support or sympathy to friends.

Some women also felt that disciplinary courts should not be internal because they could not be neutral. Even the presence of an outside judge was not sufficient to make the proceedings fair, and some women felt that you were always assumed to be guilty. Although just under half of those at P4W who had been before the disciplinary court felt that access to lawyers in court was adequate, many commented that access was limited by the level of the charge. It was felt that charges were rated as intermediate rather than serious to avoid having to bring in legal assistance. Others commented that bringing in a lawyer gave the impression that you were guilty from the start.

Apart from the reduction of discretion over rule application, however, many women stressed that their behaviour should not necessarily result in punishment. What was needed was more acceptance that they were at times under great stress, that arguments and outbursts should be talked through, perhaps with a mediator, but certainly that staff should help them to cope with that stress in ways other than punishment, which merely increased tensions and barriers to communication.

<u>Grievance procedures - "they look good on paper"</u>

Most provincial prisons do not have an inmate grievance procedure on the lines of that at P4W. In these prisons women had variously referred complaints or made appeals to the Director, to the Ombudsman, or to the inmate committee. Having a formal inmate grievance procedure does not necessarily result in more satisfactory outcomes or quicker responses, however. While a third of the women at P4W said they had never used it, of those who had, only three felt the grievance system worked well (Table 1).

Table 1

How well does any inmate grievance procedure work?				
	Prison for Women	Provinces	Total	
Alright, works well	3	7	10	6 %
Very slow, not working well	18	8	26	15 %
Terrible, a joke	45	25	70	41 %
Don't know, never used it	34	24	58	34 %
No information	2	4	6	4 %
Number of women	102	68	170	100 %

The great majority (44%) felt very strongly that it was useless: "Can wait for up to a year to get a grievance to the Region....denied all the time". "Grievances don't go out of the building". "Bullshit - you send grievances in and get told 'it's none of your business'". "It's a joke, it's there for show." "No one wins a grievance".

In the provinces, some women who had used the Ombudsman were unhappy that staff in the prison had been informed and that their complaints were not confidential (although in one case there had been a satisfactory outcome). There was also a report that an inmate overheard to say "call the Ombudsman" was charged with inciting a riot and given 14 days in segregation. Some women felt that information about their rights was kept from inmates to prevent complaints, others that appeal to the Director brought no change. One said there was little point in appealing to the Director about a disciplinary decision if you had to wait 10 days in segregation before hearing from him or her. A particular problem for provincially housed women was the use of the threat of transfer to P4W against those who made too much fuss: "the unit rep. can be approached...but it's not working...told to stop or be transferred out". "Women are sent to P4W too easily".

Unit Management System at P4W

"The new rules on the range are a source of a lot of tensions....cells used to be unlocked, now they aren't, even though incidents don't happen in cells....There are only 28 chairs in the activity room for 50 women....they say they want to run this place like a man's prison."

The recently introduced Unit Management System at P4W, which was designed to integrate the treatment programmes and security functions of the prison and smooth the working of the institution, was not seen by the majority of women to be working well (Table 2).

Table 2

How is Unit Management Working?	
Working well	5
Not working	22
Not working - wrong people chosen	32
Don't know much about it, not yet in place	40
No information	3
Number of women	102

Only five women felt that the system had brought about improvements in day-to-day matters, and 40 thought that it was not yet in place, or had no opinion about it. For the rest the major response was that it has increased tensions and security "mass punishment has been introduced"; "[there is] no communication with inmates...impose too many restrictions"; "makes more trouble...they change the rules frequently"; "deals more with discipline"; "not accessible" and for a third of the population, this view was strongly compounded by the belief that the wrong people had been chosen for the task. Given the overall view of the majority of women that they need support rather than security, this is not surprising.

Staff Training - the clearest indication of a need for change

"training in compassion, how to treat us with respect..."

Perhaps the clearest indication of how the women have experienced imprisonment, and of their expressed need for change comes from their responses to a question about the training staff in a woman's prison should have. Here few women had no opinion. The overwhelming response from both P4W and provincial prisons was that special training or qualities were needed to work with women in prison (Table 3).

In the first place around half of the population felt that staff should have specific training in such areas as psychology, human relations, and communication skills. Anger management was also stressed by some, and native inmates in particular felt it essential for non-native staff to learn about aboriginal culture and spirituality. Many women mentioned the need for staff to learn about the origins and treatment of sexual and physical abuse, and the problems of addiction and its treatment. One or two suggested that ex-inmates should take part in training programmes, and that all staff should themselves spend six weeks in prison as part of their training - much as trainee managers do in the commercial and business world.

"Psychological training to understand women"

"Psychological training, common sense and [know] how to handle emotional situations"

"Alcohol/drug treatment information...much more insight into addictions...made to understand what the inmate goes through or has gone through"

"Training in our [native traditional] beliefs and ways"

"Basic communication for situations that can be solved by talking"

"Insight on drug abuse, sexual abuse, psychology courses....more understanding"

Table 3

Training staff need to work in a women's prison*		
	Prison for Women	Provinces
Training in psychology/human relations/communication skills/native backgrounds/abuse/addiction	50 (49 %)	29 (43 %)
Need the right personality - treat women as humans/with respect/show understanding/talk over problems-not punish/have compassion	32 (31 %)	15 (22 %)
No specific training needed	6) 20 %	10) 35 %)
Don't know	14)	14)
No information	4	5
Number of women	102	68

* some women stressed both

Secondly, many women stressed that it was also a question of having essential personal qualities in terms of how you relate to other people. Thus they stressed that staff should treat women as human beings and with respect, that they should have understanding of the kinds of lives and circumstances they have lived through, that they should be able to talk through problems rather than punish, and that they should have compassion.

"Know the needs of women in prison....be sensitive to women's problems"

"Compassion for women's situations"

"Learn to treat women as adults"

"Sensitivity to how women have come to be in prison"

"More understanding of why women want to talk"

"Humanity - how to treat [women] with respect...not to be on power trips...not to treat like juveniles"

"Humanity...attitude towards women...[we are] humans not animals"

"Basic respect, humanitarian training, empathy..."

Essentially, however, whether in terms of specific training needs or personal qualities required, what the women are stressing is the need for staff to have more awareness and understanding of their behaviour, and to be able to provide them with the support and concern they feel they need.

At this point the views of staff themselves have not been sought, but this is not to suggest that their own sensitivities are of no concern. This survey was designed to find out the views of the women, and what they say reflects their perceptions of what it is like to experience imprisonment. The links between how people are treated in any situation by those in positions of authority over them, and how they in turn behave cannot be ignored in relation to prison. Conditioning takes place on both sides and the use of punishment or isolation as a response to infractions of rules, however trivial or serious, does not in the view of the women themselves help in any way to deal with the reasons for that behaviour in the first place.

Some women felt that to punish wrong doing rather than encourage achievements was counterproductive. They lost privileges as punishment, or for poor work reports, but were rarely rewarded for good performances. Why too did everyone have to earn what should be provided? They needed staff to work with them for their release, not their return to prison, and it makes a great deal of sense to reconsider what imprisonment implies if we truly want to assist those inside to build more satisfactory lives on their return to the community.

"It would be nice to have someone say "Hello" with a smile occasionally."

12. DOING TIME: LIFERS AND LONG TERMERS

"Twenty-five year sentences are unjust for women in regards to their life situation and what has led them to commit their crimes."

"My studies are my own solution"

"Quiet time - a place to go to more regularly."

"Staff should be more considerate of the fact that P4W becomes a woman's home."

"Less security "

"Women who are doing long-sentences [should] be given something as an incentive eg mechanics at Collin's Bay"

"You have to be on a even keel all the time. You can't be too sad, too mad, too happy, too anything."

"There's no logic to this system...there's something terrible about seeing this place too closely....it's like living in two worlds. One (prison) is confined and the other (academics) has no boundaries."

What do women serving very long sentences, or sentenced to life with a minimum of ten or twenty-five years before parole eligibility regard as priorities in terms of the conditions, services and programmes they need? With the gradual accumulation of women serving long sentences in the federal population, following the passing of Bill C-84 in 1976, this is an issue of considerable concern.

To some extent seeing yourself as a long sentence prisoner is not entirely related to the length of the sentence given by the court. Much depends on where you are serving your time, as well as how you cope with that time, and whether you have any previous experience of prison. Some women in provincial prisons regarded themselves as long sentence offenders because of their federal status among provincially sentenced women. Some women serving life sentences with a ten-year minimum before parole eligibility did not feel the need for any special treatment and said they were "coping well".

Nevertheless, there is, for those doing life rather than a long sentence a significant difference. As one woman put it, "doing life is having a system that's going to own you to the day you die". It has implications for case management, for planning, for eligibility for parole and the earning of privileges, as well as for security reviews.

On the whole women serving life sentences are sent to P4W on the grounds that there are more facilities for them there. Of the 46 women in the population serving life, 34 are at P4W, and 10 are housed in provincial prisons either awaiting appeals or because they chose to stay in their province. A further 16 women are serving sentences of ten years or more, and 45 sentences of 5 to 9 years, and 16 of these women are housed in provincial prisons. Many of those serving long sentences, especially for life, are in prison for the first time.

Coping with a long sentence

As indicated in the discussion of programmes, a number of women felt that there was a need for special programmes for lifers and those serving long sentences. Few specified what those programmes might need to cover, although one or two suggested the ex-long termers should come in to talk, but the strains of serving a long sentence were very evident. Some had found that they had less and less in common with relatives or knowledge of the people and places with which they had been familiar. One has weekly letters from home but says she has trouble keeping up "What's there to say?" One found visits "tiresome - they expect to see someone familiar. I'm not that person anymore."

Coping with long term separation from children and family was one of the issues for some, others suggested there was a need for more liaison with families and for family counselling, and that all-day visits should be allowed, not just for 3 hours. Others felt it was very important to have earlier Temporary Absence passes home to visit families, rather than always having to see them in the prison.

"The paradise of hell"

In some prisons women serving very long sentences may be given better privileges in terms of location and accommodation, freer access to the yard outside and away from the sound of bells. Places to retreat to which are quiet also seemed important to a number of women, including the use of the Little House, or La Roulotte at Maison Tanguay, for 'solo visits'.

Access to mental health services at their own request was also mentioned by several: "I was told I didn't need [them]". Another commented that the psychologist had never asked to see her, even

though she was doing a very long sentence "I think it should be mandatory for women with long sentences....maybe once every 3 or 4 months, just to make sure everything's O.K.".

Good recreational programmes inside the institution are also important for many of these women (a skating rink, dancing, outdoor winter sports, a place to blow off steam) more time for exercising, ("have to yell to get one hour outside ") and entertainment in the evening. Some stressed easier access to materials for craft work and hobbies, classes on art, photography, and drama, and the need for a newsletter. Earlier access to passes for swimming, visits, work outside the institution, long walks and earlier T.A.'s home were also suggested.

A number felt it important to have opportunities to have some contact with men to prevent what one described as 'culture shock' - "C'est important d'avoir des rapports avec des gens du sexe opposé". One felt that men should be allowed into the institution for socials, another few that women should be housed in separate living units in male institutions. Long sentence women were in fact equally divided over this issue, of those serving ten years or more half would opt for a co-correctional prison if they had a choice, and half would not, or had no preference.

One-to-one vocational planning for long-term offenders was thought essential. Most stressed the need for good work training. One suggested "a job swop programme with male institutions would be good", others earlier work release. The present system which ties security rating to parole eligibility means that lifers at P4W must wait five years before being allowed out for training programmes e.g., to Bath or Collin's Bay institutions and was felt to be a problem. One or two women who had already spent a number of years inside had run through the gamut of programmes, and some variety or progression in training was clearly important.

Tax advice was another area which long-sentence women felt there was a need for. One women stressed that she needed more autonomy over questions of money in relation to what she did with her savings, for example, and another in a provincial prison thought women should be allowed to put money into their personal accounts in the same way as federal men at a nearby prison could.

Only around five of these women regarded themselves as in need of close security, usually for their own protection. Among the rest a third felt they needed at the most some perimeter security, but half of them none at all, although one or two said they had needed some security at the start of their sentence. Certainly there was no clear indication that as a whole they preferred to be with other long-sentence women. They needed a change of faces.

There are clearly some important issues identified by these women in terms of the way in which they are dealt with. However, as subsequent discussion of where women in the federal population would prefer to be located indicates, there is not much to suggest that they would prefer to be together in a special setting, or that their overall needs differ that much from other women serving shorter sentences - all women want work and training skills, access to family, access to good programmes, better health care, food and recreation, and "to be treated like people".

13. ABORIGINAL WOMEN IN PRISON

One of the purposes of the survey was to consider the particular problems confronting aboriginal women within the federal population. Some of these issues are discussed elsewhere in this report, this section tries to draw them together. Thirty nine aboriginal women agreed to be interviewed, 22 in P4W and 17 in the provinces. Among this population are many women who have faced a great number of difficulties and disruptions in their lives, and who have lived with the problems specific to people whose traditions, culture, and way of life have been systematically destroyed by the larger Euro-Canadian society. Some have been brought up in native communities, others

placed in non-native foster families. Due to the difficulties aboriginal people face today in regaining traditions interrupted by Euro-Canadian intervention, many aboriginal women presently in prison have only recently begun to reclaim their native heritage. The women interviewed are from many different tribes including Blackfoot, Cree, Desaulteaux, Haida, Micmac, Montagnais, Ojibway, and Shwap.

From this group of women comes a strong and uniform plea that their cultural and spiritual backgrounds be recognised and accepted, and that all aspects of their treatment within the prison and on release in the community reflect this recognition. This plea comes not only from P4W where to some extent there is closer identification between native women, but also from women scattered across the country in provincial prisons. Individually, the great majority of aboriginal women expressed clearly that assistance from aboriginal people, access to traditional sacred objects and the right to traditions such as Sweat Lodges and Pow-Wows, are of utmost importance in their personal growth and preparation for return to the community.

The experience of disruption and abuse

In general, both inside and outside prison, native women have experienced much greater disruption in their lives than non-native women, facing racism directed against them individually and facing the effects of racism against their communities. From a very early age many have been adopted into non-native families, placed in non-native foster and group homes, and into reformatories when they reacted against the original upheaval. As a result of disruption in their own communities, or hazards faced in trying to enter non-native communities, they were much more likely to have experienced physical abuse and sexual abuse, both as children and adults, than the non-native population (91% reported physical abuse and 61% sexual abuse).

A number have been brought up in communities with high levels of addiction and themselves began drinking at an early age, 11, 12, 14. Many left foster homes or residential homes at 14 or 15 and have lived on the streets from that age. As previous sections have outlined, addiction problems among the native women were even more common than for the non-native population, often over a longer period, with a corresponding higher incidence of serious problems faced in life. A high proportion dropped out of school early, due to a combination of early responsibilities at home, cultural disruption of their parent's generation, or to an inappropriate school curriculum taught by non-native teachers insensitive to cultural differences. Some had no formal schooling, and none had any training or formal skills beyond basic education before their entry into prison, not having had the opportunity to obtain schooling, or the assistance in solving problems that prevented them seeking out further education.

For native women with few educational or work skills, some single mothers with no access to child care, the chances of finding well-paid or steady jobs is probably lower than anyone else's. Only five (13%) said they had always worked (compared with 46% of the non-native women) 18 usually had trouble finding work, or often been unemployed, and 16 (41%) never had a legitimate job, compared with only 13% of the non-native population. Many have experienced overt racism in applying for work.

It is clear that problems leading up to incarceration could have been prevented had aboriginal women received assistance with obtaining access to higher levels of education. In prison a number have upgraded their educational level, some working now at university courses, some taking vocational training courses and wishing to develop their skills. A number of them would prefer outdoor work or want to gain skills in a variety of job fields, and a great many want to do some kind of social work, often with young people in trouble with the law.

In the case of some women, despite obvious skills, their lack of formal schooling is a barrier which they find hard to overcome, due to lack of financial support, and the problems of curriculum in non-native institutions being culturally biased and, therefore, unfamiliar and difficult to contend with. Many felt their personal abilities were underestimated by staff in the prison and found it difficult to express themselves to non-native people who use language in a different way, and they preferred to work in the institution. A number have been diverted from school to work even though they expressed a wish to attend ("I tried to take education - they put me in the kitchen instead").

Families and children

A higher proportion of native women also have children (77%) compared with the non-native population (61%), and in general more children, a number having four or five. They place a high priority on keeping their children with them. Some have lost custody of some of their children to foster or adoptive families, often as a result of incarceration, and are allowed no contact or information about their whereabouts. A number have made attempts to trace their children, or their own biological parents, with little or no support.

While those in provincial prisons were generally in the province where their families lived, almost all those in P4W found themselves very cut off from their communities and relatives in the Prairies and B.C. ("three visits in eight years"). Most had not made a choice of programmes over family contact, and had been sent against their will to Kingston ("I [would preferred] to have remained in a prison closer to home"). A number specifically wanted a transfer back to a prison in their own province in order to be able to see their families. "My family do not have the money to see me - a transfer to a provincial institution would allow me to see them."

Apart from having visits from their families, many women in the provinces as well as P4W wanted to have visits from native community leaders and counsellors. For many women this was of the utmost importance, and often their main, if not their only request.

The experience of discrimination

"White men think native girls are stupid...."

While this survey did not focus on events in their lives prior to this sentence it is clear that many of the women have experienced discrimination and prejudice generally in their lives as well as from the criminal justice system, being told variously "I don't like natives", described as 'a wino and lysol' drinker or 'a squaw', experienced discriminatory behaviour from the police, and not been listened to by criminal justice personnel when they have been sexually abused.

In prison - whether in the provinces or P4W - a number felt they were the target of racism and discrimination "native women are given worse clothing, and held longer before release", "native women face prejudice about parole", "native women are waiting for places in school", "staff are prejudiced....they humiliate native women....they laugh at us". While not all staff were felt to treat them in this way, almost all said that very few staff had any real understanding or acceptance of their cultural backgrounds and practices, or of the kinds of lives they had led in terms of addiction and abuse experiences:

> "non-native guards go through my medicine bag without any reason. If they understood our culture they would not be so aggressive with the native women."
>
> "we are not slaves or animals, we have emotions like anyone else - they treat us badly - threatening us with charges. They act in an aggressive manner - if you act aggressive back

you get thrown in seg. You have to succumb and beat down on yourself so as not to get punished."

"I think there is a lot of racism by the staff. I think a lot of staff and some inmates are jealous of native women - they don't like it when we have events such as sweats which makes us strong, and they see it as getting away with stuff, when it is only to give us strength in our culture."

"[staff] are uneducated on native traditions, especially new staff - thought sweetgrass was marijuana."

A number of native women had spent long periods in segregation ("I spent a year in seg.") for punitive purposes, some because they were thought to be in danger of injuring themselves. Whatever the reasons, the collective view was that they were discriminated against, and sentenced to segregation unnecessarily. A number of native and non-native women in provincial prisons remarked that it was the native women who were vocal, and found it more difficult to 'do their time' quietly, who tended to be transferred to P4W.

"The environment makes a person aggressive, the close proximity, the lack of privacy."

Given their collective experience of family disruption, abuse and discrimination outside prison, as well as the feeling that prison staff understand little of their culture, it is of little surprise that many find it difficult not to become depressed and upset by daily events. Due to these extreme difficulties faced throughout their lives, aboriginal women are more likely to have injured themselves, or attempted suicide than non-natives, often in prison, as a response to a system which is found to be totally foreign culturally, and punitive rather than supportive.

That they end up in segregation for their behaviour compounds their view that no one cares or understands.

"I wanted to hurt someone else by doing it to myself."

"I need someone to love me and care for me....talk to me.... someone to trust me....I feel lonely."

"I don't think anyone cares for me."

For all these women the solution to many of the problems are clear:

"we need more native workers inside of the system such as Elders counsellors, CO's, CX's, anything to do with prison."

"there should be more Indian staff here"

"a Native person to represent us when we [get into] trouble with the staff."

"we should have more native staff as Correctional Officers (CO's), counsellors here on a full-time basis. We would be able to communicate our problems much better."

"we need a quiet room with counselling - no seg."

"..help and understanding much earlier rather than labelling and drugging by the psychiatric profession."

And most of them stressed the crucial importance of staff having training in native culture, as well as in the links between abuse and addiction problems, so that understanding rather than condemnation can take place when help is needed.

A circle of healing

Nor is their concern only with custodial staff, as discussion elsewhere in this report underlines, native women often feel uncomfortable with non-native medical staff or those running programmes for addiction, alcohol or abuse.

"Doctors are harsh on native women - all they do is medicate you so you become submissive - there should be more Elders to see and heal us." "There should be more sweats and spirituality with Elders, to be healed."

"AA was useless as it was forced on me - I would prefer to attend a native-run alcohol group."

"I liked them, [drug and alcohol programmes at P4W] they were useful, however, native programmes are more appropriate as there is a circle of healing."

"I don't use them [psychologist/psychiatrist] because they don't understand my culture..."

"I can't relate unless its a native group."

"We need a native-run alcohol programme - white people don't know what it is like to be an Indian but they think they do."

While a number had found individual sessions with psychiatrists or psychologists helpful, they almost always reinforced the fact that they would prefer a native counsellor. As one woman remarked in relation to counselling for sexual abuse "....[its] slow because I don't feel comfortable - I want to talk about it, but with a native counsellor. I think she would understand more about my culture."

And where women have had an opportunity to interact with native workers they express far more satisfaction: "the native sexual [abuse] group has changed me - given me confidence to believe in myself." Nor are such views restricted to P4W where a number of native-based programmes have recently been run. Women in the provinces repeatedly stressed they wanted access to native medicine men and women, to traditional medicines, to native counsellors and Elders. In some prisons Elders visited regularly, in others infrequently or not at all. Some women had also participated in native-based addiction programmes outside prison such as Poundmakers Lodge or New Dawn which they found helpful, and more relevant than the usual Christian-based AA programmes available inside.

Reinforcing native traditions

Recent native cultural and spiritual programmes at P4W had been very successful "a great experience", and most women wanted more:

"someone to come in once a week to reinforce native culture, dance, drumming - women get discouraged - they need spiritual leadership."

"we need a spiritual room where sweetgrass is available, where we can burn sweetgrass at any time when we need it."

A number of women wanted to learn native dancing and singing. Women in the provinces wanted more Sweats, and the request to have sweetgrass, prayer bundles, cedar, or sage allowed in personal possessions and individual rooms, or to be able to use them other than at very restricted times was repeated in virtually every prison visited. Not all native women, nevertheless, wanted to take part in spiritual meetings, either because the ceremonies represented a different native heritage from their own or they did not personally place so great an emphasis on native spirituality. Access to different native cultural backgrounds and communities is therefore important.

Going out into the community

While some native women have close and extended families to whom they will return, a number are without such support, or need help with their addiction, or most important to many, with developing skills training and finding jobs. As with in-prison programmes, they feel the need for native-based support. One described herself as having no base to connect with on release.

"There is no support system available. I need a support system badly, I am not prepared for the streets...support from the native community."

"....a support network for native women when they get out of jail. Connections with the native community should start before a woman is released i.e., to native social service agencies, half-way houses, native housing authorities etc."

"[I got] no help - I was back on the street on the same corner I got picked up."

"It's hard on the outside to find a job."

"I...need to network with the Band."

Only in the case of some women in the provinces where good arrangements with native half-way houses or fostering services had been used did release look more promising at least in the short term. In most cases, those with previous experience in prison felt they had got little help in planning their release, and almost none on release.

Finally, the list of one woman underlines the all-encompassing quest to find support in the native community:

native child care programmes
native drug and alcohol programmes
"the medicine wheel"
native adoption programme
native life skills
native sexual abuse programme
native social worker
native one-to-one counsellor
native Elders

and others would add:

native cultural studies
native foods
native pow-wow dancing
native adult-child alcohol programme
native psychologist
native doctors
native support group
native remedies
native drumming.

For the present most native women are unwillingly caught up to varying degrees in a circle not of healing but of addiction, unemployment, abuse and discrimination from which without strong and lasting support few people would be unable to escape. And as they have themselves clearly said, the most obvious response must be to offer programmes, support and treatment which are appropriate to nat e women, to their culture and to their potential.

14. ALTERNATIVES AND CHOICES

"Women should have the choice."

Many assumptions have been made in the past about what federal women need or want, particularly in relation to where they would prefer to be located. At present many women are in the position of having to choose between staying near their home communities and family, or opting - they hope - for more programmes and services in Prison for Women.

The view from the provinces

Only 7 of the women in provincial prisons had ever spent time in P4W, so their knowledge of conditions and services available was limited. They saw P4W as offering better conditions in terms of services and programmes and activities, earlier release, and more freedom to wear their own clothes and keep their possessions. The disadvantages centred around the distance from home, and fear of the atmosphere and regime which they saw as tough and violent. Provincial prisons they regarded as less hard, kinder to the women, and offering visits and contact with family and children, and earlier releases to the community or minimum security settings.
The disadvantages included the loss of federal rights to health payments (see Appendix II) the lack of programmes and schooling, and being seen as high risk inmates. A few mentioned being with short-termers. Some of these comments, and those of women at P4W are set out in Appendix I, and III.

Choice of Placement

As part of the survey, and in view of the longstanding deadlock over whether federally sentenced women should be located in one place, or in their own region, all women in the population were asked where they would prefer to serve their sentence and under what kinds of conditions, in terms of security levels, programme access, other inmates and staff. A series of 'possible' alternatives was suggested to them. Apart from P4W this included a central federal prison for women, regional federal prisons for women or men and women, provincial prisons, and small community residences. While this was a hypothetical list, it was intended to provide some guidelines to the Task Force as to the kinds of preferences women have.

Given such alternatives, overall only 19 women would opt to serve their sentence in P4W (Table 1). Of these the majority came from nearby towns and cities (e.g., Kingston, Ottawa, Montreal) 3 had no specific ties, 1 was from the Prairies, and five from outside Canada. Of the 4 women who would prefer a new central prison for women, two were from nearby cities, one had no clear ties, and one was from the Prairies.

Thirty three women would choose a federal women's prison in their region; 44 a co-correctional prison (mostly sharing all facilities apart from living quarters, less often just programmes); 12 a provincial women's prison and 9 a provincial co-educational prison. By far the most popular choice (82) was a small community residence for women close to home. A further 9 women suggested a farm-based centre with lots of work, a native half-way house, community work, or transfer to their country of origin.

Table 1

What sort of place would you want to do your time in?*			
	Prison for Women	Provinces	Total
Prison for Women	16	3	19
New Central Federal Prison for Women	1	3	4
Regional Federal Prison for Women	20	13	33
Regional Federal Prison for M + F	8	8	16
Regional Federal Prison for M + F sharing all facilities	21	7	28
Provincial Prison for Women	6	6	12
Provincial Prison for M + F	5	4	9
Small community residence for women close to home	37	45	82
Other	6	3	9
No information	1	1	2
Number of women	102	68	-

*some women made more than one choice

The high proportion of women in provincial prisons who would choose a small community residence reflects the fact that in general their sentences were relatively short - and that they did not see themselves as needing the high security levels provided by P4W or even those in provincial prisons. Asked whether they felt they needed much security, whether inside the prison in terms of

restricted movement and close surveillance, or in terms of external perimeter controls, almost all women in the provinces responded that what they needed was support not security. Only two felt they needed at least some security to prevent them leaving.

There were some women in the provinces who felt the need to be with other women serving long sentences, in a quieter environment, and without the distractions and possible drug problems brought by the 'ins and outs' - those serving short provincial sentences. In some prisons such special facilities for long-termers were provided. Others stressed that they preferred the change in faces and the variety of a mixed provincial regime, and felt that to move all federal women to a regional facility would inevitably increase tensions.

Long sentence choices

It is also of interest that there was little difference between the choices made by those serving 'short' sentences under five years, and those serving sentences of five or more years. On the whole roughly equal numbers of women in each group opted for the various alternatives (Table 2). The one exception was that none of the 21 women serving long federal sentences in the provinces would opt to stay in a provincial facility (although given the current choice between that and P4W, some do wish to remain there now). It would appear, therefore, that there is no obvious relationship between having a long sentence and wanting a particular type of place in which to serve your sentence. Nor was there any observable difference in choices among those serving very long sentences of ten years or more. On the whole, women serving long sentences are not a coherent and distinct group of women with very different needs from others. What distinguishes them most is the length of their sentence.

Table 2

	'SHORT' TERMERS	'LONG' TERMERS
Prison for Women	9	10
New Central Prison	2	1
Reg.Fed. Prison + Women	17	16
Reg.Fed. Prison M + F	25	21
Prov. Prison + Women	7	5
Prov. Prison M + F	8	1
Community Residence + Women	45	37
Other	4	5
Number of women	86	83

*some made more than one choice

This is borne out too by the factors all women felt were of most importance in making a choice. The majority of women in P4W and the provinces (115) stressed being as close to home as possible, 68 said access to programmes, 37 being with women serving similar sentences, and 27 being with women only (Table 3).

Table 3

Most important factors in choice of placement*		
	Prison for Women	Provinces
Being as near home as possible	63	52
Being with women only	16	11
Having access to programmes	30	40
Being with women serving similar sentences	24	13
Other**	5	0
Don't know & no information	2	6
Number of women	102	68

*some women stressed more than one factor

** (e.g., more freedom, safety, health.)

(These figures give only a rough guide since the question was interpreted slightly differently across the survey).

Co-corrections

Forty two women had had experience of living in a co-correctional prison, either in Canada or the U.S. A further group had spent brief periods with men in remand settings or on work release to Bath Institution. Overall around half the population (48%) said they would like to be housed in a co-correctional prison if they had the choice (Table 4). In most cases they did not stipulate any conditions, although some stressed that they would want separate living quarters. "It would be more effective to have separate living units in male prisons across Canada - women should have the choice." Otherwise all would want to share programmes and other activities (canteen, recreation facilities etc.) with men. The main reasons given were that they preferred a more normal atmosphere, "I get along better with men", that it would help them "stay in reality and be better prepared for the outside", "...healthy, more normal..more like programmes than time...otherwise you loose touch with life", and that they wanted access to the wider range of programmes available in men's prisons. Many of those who had worked on the Bath microfilm programme commented that they had enjoyed the company of men.

Table 4

Would you prefer to be in a co-correctional prison if a choice?		
	Prison for Women	Provinces
Yes	51	30
No	46	26
Don't know	4	11
No information	1	1
Number of women	102	68

Those who would not choose a co-correctional setting (42%) were usually quite firm - "no way" - and one or two quite shocked at the idea, either because they did not like to be with men ("...find men rude and insensitive towards women"), felt there would be no privacy, or did not feel it appropriate when many women have been abused. Some thought it would add to tensions and jealousies.

Having previous (or current) experience of co-corrections does influence that choice to some extent. As with many other issues some women would choose such an environment and some not. Among those women currently in a co-correctional prison, or with previous experience, 26 would choose to be in one, 13 would not (and 3 did not know).

Male guards and women in prison

A further issue was that of male guards. Several provincial prisons apart from co-correctional ones already have a number of male guards. Here there was a clear divergence of opinion between those in P4W and those in the provinces. Only around a third of women at P4W would want to see (more) male guards there, compared with almost two thirds of those in the provinces. For the most part women in P4W did not think it appropriate to have male guards either for reasons of privacy, or because many women had experienced abuse from men.

This view is not necessarily incompatible with their views on co-corrections since they see P4W as a woman's prison, and in terms of its architecture it provides little privacy especially on the ranges.

In provincial prisons with male guards most women felt there were enough, although some did not like men doing rounds in living quarters, particularly at night. And as a number of women put it, a lot depends on their attitude, and how they treat you not on whether they are male or female.

Having choices

Asking anyone to choose between one place or another, or to give their preferences is always a problem. The answers can be created in the way questions are put, or in the range of items from which they are asked to choose. It also makes a considerable difference to the choice if you have some experience of the alternatives being offered. In asking the women about their preferences for the kinds of conditions under which they would choose to do their time and where, we can,

however, gain a broad indication of what is important to them. As with other issues which they talked about, it seems important that they should have at least some choice. And they would choose to be as close to their homes as possible, in supportive, not secure environments, with access to good programmes and facilities - and to be treated as human beings, as women, with respect and dignity.

APPENDIX I

ALTERNATIVES

The View from Kingston	
The Advantages and Disadvantages of Provincial Prisons	
Advantages	Disadvantages
Near family and friends Guaranteed parole Better pay Quicker releases More programmes (sic) More phone calls Day parole Easier access to lawyers Staff more concerned	No passes No personal items No half-way house Poorer food No education Fighting (at Remand Centre) No resources No Federal rights Small Doing time with short-termers Everything you have is locked up No school Less space Low pay

Advantages and disadvantages of Prison for Women	
Advantages	**Disadvantages**
More groups, services	More trouble, fights
School	Distance
More freedom within institution	long-distance calls
Own cell	Marked a Federal ex-con
Programmes better	Nothing forwome
Visits better (sic)	Multi-level classification
Treated like an adult	Poor pay
Own clothes	No exercise
More privacy	Not able to go to groups
Passes acquired faster	Away from family
Make more money	More security oriented
None	Need more programmes
	No visits
	No family access
	Tough
	Far from family
	Too many women
	Lesbianism
	Staff aren't friendly
	No phone calls
	No lawyers from home
	No one seems to care

The View from the Provinces	
The Advantages and Disadvantages of Provincial Prisons	
Advantages	**Disadvantages**
Children	Loss of privileges
Language	Being with short termers
Mentalité plus douce	Lots of drugs
Peut de se débrouiller en sortant	Can't see friends with records
None	Don't know how to adapt
Less hard	Programmes, isolation, no one to talk to
quiet	No work, not enough school
Connait Montréal	Bad reputation
Visits from family	With short termers
Contact with daughter	Only one half-way house
Smaller, less hardened	No schooling on location
None that I know	None
Easier release	Lack of programmes esp. trades
Access to job at higher salary	Lack of programmes and funding for them
Staying out of drug scene	Teeth not covered, pay glasses
Heard easier access to TA's from here	No TV, stereo or own clothes
Outside work available	Prices higher
Not having to go to Kingston	No hairdressing
Day Parole to community	Dental, food, programmes, clothing, wages
No P4W 'Federal mark"	Loss of federal status
Pre-release to minimum security	Only able to wear digital watches, no jewellery
Family, esp. mother's health	High canteen taxes
Kinder women	Rapists in population - not fair to women
Fear of P4W, familiar with this place	Automatically seeing federal women as high risk
Doux et léger	None
	No university courses

The View from the Provinces	
The Advantages and Disadvantages of Prison for Women	
Advantages	Disadvantages
Activities Programmes Programmes and activities Architecture, habillement None Living next door to friends Native spirituality Ranges open for communication Programmes, trades, pay, earlier release Federal rights Better education post High School leaving Can spend own money New clothing on entry and leaving Grievance procedure More available for French inmates	Told by inmates woult get out faster but Social worker says it's not true Distance Hard mentality Violent Very far Language Too hard Rules too severe Mentalité plus 'tough' Long sentences Pas soutien moral Too much fighting Fear of P4W Thoughts of P4W - fear The cold, hard bitterness of women in P4W

APPENDIX II

FEDERAL RIGHTS IN PROVINCIAL SETTINGS

Women in the provinces experience considerable confusion over their position as federal prisoners. Many of them mentioned the problems of waiving federal rights in relation to parole. Some had been advised to waive their federal rights in order to get an earlier parole or temporary release, others had been told to go to P4W if they wanted a quicker release. There were also suggestions of discriminatory treatment vis a vis provincially sentenced women in relation to parole, suggesting that in the eyes of provincial parole boards provincially-housed federal women appear more serious offenders than would be the case at P4W where sentences are generally much longer. Some of these issues are illustrated in the following comments:

"federal women are unable to get passes to the community before one sixth of their sentence"

"federal women have difficulty getting parole from provincial institutions...they are seen as 'hardened'..."

"difficult for federal women to get passes (Temporary Absences - TA's)"

"I signed the federal waiver to apply for provincial TA after being denied federal parole at 1/6th - does it help?"

"other federals brought up as example for my parole - not right to judge all federals the same....held back by the behaviour of other federal women"

"transfers are difficult [to another provincial prison], was told I would have to go via P4W - don't want to go to P4W"

"there is a loss of federal rights - dental payment, problems getting glasses...." "...not great at P4W but impossible in provinces" "loss of right to possess own TV in room or have ghettoblasters or walkman's in cells"

"I was told that waiving federal release plans for provincial status would get me home faster. I still ended up with day parole to the Half-way House."

"There is no new issue of clothing to go out with on release, or [payment for a] ticket home [as there is at P4W]".

"tried to send me to P4W...wanted to avoid the 'Kingston mark'...it's hard to get to a minimum."

Variations between provinces in the scope of federal or provincial parole coverage as well as differences in parole requirements within provincial systems make for a complex system, but provincially housed women do not at present receive a clear enough indication of the alternatives available. Nor can they judge the advantages on the basis of the conflicting information often given to them by different people - prison staff, classification officers, parole officers, other women - in and out of the prison. Parole is a lottery for many women, they cannot predict their chances of being granted day parole or full parole. These women are placed in a double bind in that they must weigh their chances of getting federal parole against their chances of success with provincial parole, and possibly opt for location in Kingston and away from their home province, in the hope of an earlier release.

(One woman who failed to get federal parole and opted to switch back to the provincial system, felt she was subjected to a vendetta by prison staff).

Other differences between provincial conditions and those at P4W included the greater restrictions on movement in and out of each other's cells, on how many clothes they were allowed to have and the periodic cell-searches and punishments for having more than the allotted number of items. In addition, a number of women commented that lesbian relationships were handled very insensitively in most provincial prisons. Women were not allowed to touch, were disciplined for being in each other's rooms, not allowed to sit at the same tables at meal times. This meant that even platonic relationships are punished as in the case of one woman disciplined for hugging a friend who was having a bad time.

APPENDIX III

LETTER FROM WOMAN IN PROVINCIAL PRISON

September 1989

What I have to say in this first part is based mainly on my observation from the last few years of being in this system. I have never been the victim of sexual abuse as a child, although from talking to other women in different situations I've discovered that the percentage of them who've lived this type of nightmare is incredibly high. There is some psychological counselling available here but I feel that it is totally inadequate. There needs to be program designed to help women work through the anger, guilt, fear and negative emotions that accompany this type of past experience.

I also see a lot of women who, because of their abuses as children allow themselves to be further victimized by men in adult relationships. Their families seem totally dysfunctional and many of them are literally torn away from their children. Women in this system, not just federal women but all of us need to be aided in keeping our families together. I've never been faced with having to re-establish relationships with children and I would dread being faced with the reality of having to do so when those children could be total strangers to me after a few years away from them. A lot of women face the heartache of losing their children permanently. There is absolutely no program available which actively encourages women to try to strengthen their ties with their families in a constructive manner. There needs to be an effort to encourage women and Social Services to use the family visiting program here to allow women and their children more time together. Family reconstruction and counselling need to start in the system, not after the women is unceremoniously dumped on society with virtually no skills to help her survive and deal with the prospect of rebuilding her life. Life Skills Programs, Living With Children and Drug Awareness Programmes, which are available here at (confidential information) are all fine, look good on paper and do help the enterprising convict scam his or her way out onto the street but they are very superficial. They are totally inadequate when it comes to dealing with the true gut-level, deep seated reasons that women end up in the system.

Now I'll get on to some of my own more personal concerns. Education. A lot of women need the upgrading that is available and for a lot, what is available here is adequate for a while. Some of us are intellectually capable of handling post-secondary schooling and it is very difficult to achieve a higher level of education. A few people here at (confidential information) have applied for (confidential information) University courses, only to be told after waiting months and paying $25 enrolment fee that there is no money left to accommodate them. Another institution has used up all of the funds allocated for this purpose, meaning that they are S.O.L. (For those of you with less delicate psyches, this means shit-out-of-luck).

Nutrition is another aspect of this particular institution that needs to be addressed. During the fall and winter months we may see a green salad once every two weeks and coleslaw and shredded carrots once a week. The milk allowance here is one glass a day ONLY and for women, especially some of us who are getting on in years, that amount of calcium is totally inadequate. I brought this concern to the attention of administration in 1985, 1986 and through 1988 and each time I've been told that it's a very valid concern. It's been over 4 YEARS and NO action has been taken. Neat huh? If I sound a little cynical, it's because I am. I could go on for days about nutrition, but to me it's like beating a dead horse so I'll spare you my agonies on that one and let it go for now.

There is a need for more CRC facilities in the (confidential information) area, (for women that is). If more women were released into the community into more supportive environments we might see a decline in the female recidivism rate and fewer women doing federal time coming back on parole

violations ending up doing 7/8 of their time. There are some of us who have led lives of prostitution and drug addiction who have a lot of guilt and low self-esteem to work through and the only available resource for counselling is the rape crisis centre which has a waiting list of months. I have personally struggled through feeling that I must be a truly lousy person to have chosen that lifestyle at one time, even though at the time it was out of need. I'm one of the lucky few who've had the inner strength to overcome that personal demon. So many other women need support an counselling to overcome something like this but there is NO program readily available for women to help them work through this.

Women's issues are more delicate and complex in the correctional system, as we have been more truly victimized and dehumanized than men. We are viewed as harlots, as having no moral fibre and being unprincipled. Men are viewed as just being criminal. If each of us were viewed individually I'm sure that some of these myths could be dispelled. Attitude towards women is the MAJOR problem as I see it.

Thanks for listening to my sounding off.

APPENDIX IV

NOTE ON THE SURVEY

The prison survey was conducted between July and November 1989. Interviews were held at the Prison for Women from August to October. Interviews with women in the provinces took place from September to November.

All federally sentenced women on register at the start of interviewing were individually invited to take part. Pilot interviews were conducted in July, but final interviews did not begin until full agreement on the questionnaire with the Task Force was reached in August.

Provincial interviews required the completion of negotiations with the provinces for access to prisons housing federally sentenced women. These women were located through the CSC Offender Information System and Regional Offices of the CSC, and invited to take part by the director or warden of the institution concerned. Twelve provincial institutions were visited.

The total number of women on register and in residence at the time of the survey was 203. It should be noted that this figure differs from that given by the Offender Information System at the time of the survey. Population profile figures for June and September 1989 were 287 and 276 respectively. The majority of the remainder were out on day parole or on temporary absence, and a few unlawfully at large.

Comparison between those interviewed and those not seen (refused or unavailable) suggests that the non-interview group were slightly older and included a higher proportion serving life sentences (14 out of 33 women or 42%) than those interviewed (32 out of 170 or 19%).

Apart from interviews, basic information on the backgrounds of the total population of federal women was collated from files for all but 4 women in the provinces who refused an interview.

Questionnaire

The Working Group of the Task Force had requested information on 'inmates programme needs'. The questionnaire was designed in discussion with the Working Group to provide information not routinely available (e.g., on children and arrangements for their care) to assess the views of the women on programme needs, and to record their experiences of imprisonment. As far as possible questions were designed to take account of the concerns of aboriginal as well as non-aboriginal women.

The interview schedule (see Appendix V) included both semi-structured and open-ended questions, and ample opportunity was given for women to talk at length about those issues which concerned them most, or other issues not raised in the questionnaire.

Interviews

Prior to the commencement of the study, meetings were held at Prison For Women with the Inmate Committee and the Native Sisterhood, as well as with staff, to explain the purpose of the survey and its links with the Task Force, and to ask for their support.

All women were interviewed in private (with the exception of one or two who did not speak English or French and where another inmate acted as interpreter). All women were given an assurance of

confidentiality, and that nothing anyone said would be identified by name. French-speaking women were interviewed in the language of their choice, and aboriginal women by native interviewers.

Interviews lasted between 3/4 hour and two hours or more. The majority lasted about 1 1/2 hours. Those at P4W were conducted by Karen Rodgers, Lee Seto Thomas and Tina Hattem, and in the provinces by Lada Tamarack, Tina Hattem and Johanne Blanchette.

Research constraints

Severe limits were imposed on the survey by the constraints of the Task Force timetable, as well as the need to fit into institutional timetables. While the Task Force provided the main impetus for the study, the need to work within their time-frame and priorities placed a number of constraints on the shape and conduct of the project. The most significant was that all interviews, file review and analysis had to be completed within a three month period, and a report on the interviews completed by December 1989.

Since interviews did not start until August when final agreement was reached with the Working Group on the questionnaire, and entry to some provincial prisons was not gained until October, this placed severe restrictions on the scope for detailed preparation, data collection and writing up. (In addition, it was decided at the end of September to conduct a survey of women on conditional release. Those interviews were conducted between November 1989 and January 1990).

APPENDIX V

INMATE INTERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

This interview is part of the work of the Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women - we sent you a letter about the interview recently. We are very anxious to have your views and to hear about your experiences of being here in prison. We really need to know what you think in order to develop better policies for women. Is there anything you would like to ask about the Task Force right now before we start?

In this interview everything you say will be treated in the strictest confidence - we will not discuss what you say with anybody - in a way which would enable you to be identified personally. We will also not be identifying you by your name on any forms.

I am going to ask you some things about yourself, such as about how you cope with being in here, how you get along with other inmates and staff, about the kind of programmes you have taken or would like to take, about things to do with health and jobs, and about your family and friends outside. I have a set of questions covering these areas, which starts off with health facilities in here, but if there is any other area or issue you would feel more comfortable starting off with feel free to say.

Before we start, would you like to tell me how you regard yourself in terms of your background and culture. (If native Indian, ask whether MicMac, Cree etc.)

In this interview we are using the term Aboriginal to refer to native peoples.

SECTION 1 PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

Can we start by talking about your experience with health facilities, spiritual medicine, non-traditional remedies here?

1. Do you have any particular concerns about your health?

2. Do you think you have adequate physical health care here?

   If not, what do you think is needed? More evening/weekend access; access to medicine men and medicines used by aboriginals/non-traditional remedies; french speaking staff; native doctor or health staff)?

3. Would you like more/regular access to: doctor/gynaecologist/dentist/other specialist/non-traditional medicine?

4. Have you ever felt that you have been misdiagnosed or mislabelled in any way?

5. What do you think about the psychological or psychiatric help here?

6. Do you use the psychologist?
   Do you use the psychiatrist?
   Native elders?

   If not, is this because you don't need to see them; don't think they could help you?

7. Are there any other programmes or services for health care or mental health problems which you think you need/should be provided?

8. What about treatment for AIDS or HIV positive inmates - or programmes about AIDS - are these needed/should they be provided?

SECTION 2 DRUG AND ALCOHOL PROBLEMS

1. Can you tell me about your experience with drugs and alcohol?

2. How much have drugs or alcohol been involved in your getting into trouble with the law?

   (How far do the following apply)

   a) In for drug offenses
   b) In for offenses to support drug/alcohol habit
   c) Offenses usually under the influence of drugs/alcohol
   d) Not related to offending in any way
   e) Not applicable - don't use them

3. Has anyone (such as a judge, parole officer, probation officer, social worker or police officer) ever suggested/made arrangements for you to have some treatment for drug or alcohol use?

4. Have you ever taken part in any alcohol or drug treatment programmes?

   What kind of programme(s) was it?

   a) before coming here

   b) in here

      e.g., AA/NA type
      Individual
      Group therapy
      Native group
      Brentwood
      Other
      Don't need any

5. How did you find the programme(s) - what was it that you found useful or not so useful?

6. Would you like to take part in some (further) drug or alcohol treatment or programme?

   If so what kind?

   AA type
   Individual
   Group therapy
   Native group
   Brentwood
   Other
   If not why?

7. What sort of drug or alcohol program do you think would be useful to you?

SECTION 3 EXERCISE AND RECREATION

Can we talk now about some of the ways you spend your time in here?

1. How would you describe your physical condition since coming here?

   If some change why is this (e.g., boredom/lack of exercise/diet...better diet/off drugs)

2. What about the food in here - how would you describe it?

3. How often do you take part in sport or exercise programmes here?
   a) regularly (every day/week)
   b) occasionally once a month, every so often
   c) almost never (why?)

4. Do you think there should be more opportunities or not? What kinds?

   Group sports etc.,
   Individual sports

5. What other <u>recreational</u> programmes do you take part in? (e.g., bingo; hobby crafts; native crafts)?

6. Would you like more to be available...what kind?

SECTION 4 EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

This section is about the kinds of work you have done in here and outside, and any training you have had.

1. What was the highest grade you completed at high school before you came here?

2. Have you done any courses since leaving school (e.g., in prison, community college, CEGEP, university)

   a) basic education e.g., Adult Basic Education
   b) on the job training
   c) technical training
   d) higher education (college; university)
   e) educational programmes for or about Aboriginal peoples, culture etc.
   f) other

   Where did you do this?

3. Do you have any qualifications/diplomas (e.g., mechanics, bus driver, hairdresser)?

   Where did you get these?

4. How have you maintained your livelihood, or made a living on the outside (e.g., job; parents; partner/husband boyfriend; welfare; unemployment pay; prostitution; drug dealing etc.)?

5. Have you usually worked, or have you often been unemployed when you wanted work?

6. When you have had a job what kind of work have you usually done? (Write in three main types of job)

   Secretarial/teller/office job
   Shop sales/waitress etc
   Domestic (cleaning etc)
   Manual industrial
   Working on the land - hunting, trapping
   Managerial/executive
   Professional
   Housewife/mother
   Other
   Never worked

   - why (e.g., student, couldn't get job etc.)

7. What work have you done in here?
   Was it paid?

8. Would you prefer other work in here?
What kind?

9. Have you taken/are you taking any training programmes in here?

What kind?

Do you think that they (it) will be useful to you?

10. What sort would you like to take (whether available or not)?

11. Have you been going to school here? - when and for what period of time?

What are you/have you studied?

Has it been useful to you?

12. What kind of courses would be useful to you?

13. What type of work would you like to do on release?
If none, why?

SECTION 5 CHILDREN

Can we talk now about children - this is a subject which we are very interested in because in the past people have tended to forget that women in prison have children.

1. Do you have any children?

   How many do you have?

   (check whether any step/foster children also responsible for?)

2. How old are they?

3. Who has had primary responsibility for raising your children before you came here?

4. Were your children living with you before this sentence?

   If they/some were not, who were they living with? (e.g., grandparent; extended family; father; Children's Aid)

   Can you tell me how this came about?

5. Are you a single parent now?

   Have you always been a single parent, or only for part of the time?

6. Who is looking after them now?

   Where is that? (e.g., in home town)

7. Have you had any contact or experience with Children Aid societies or social services in regards to your children?

   Can you tell me about it?

8. What kinds of financial help have you had in bringing up your children? (eg. worked part-time; partner; husband; welfare; unemployment pay, illegal activities.)

9. How much contact have you had with them since you came here? (e.g., regularly once a week/month, once or twice, write in number of letters, visits etc.)

   letters
   telephone
   video
   normal visits
   family visits (i.e., extended/overnight stays)
   Family Day
   T.A.'s

10. If more contact were to be arranged what kind of contact would you like?

11. What has been your experience with keeping in touch with your children? (e.g., transport; accommodation; costs of travel etc; emotional - children get upset)?

    Do you have any suggestions about how any problems could be avoided?

12. Have you felt you needed any legal services for anything to do with your children since your sentence began?

    If so, have you had any?

13. Do you expect to be living with them (again) on release [full parole?]?

    If not why is that?

14. How important would it be to your successful return to the community to have your children with you on release?

15. What kind of financial support for your children do you expect you will have on release?

16. Besides money do you have any other worries about your children on release? (e.g., accommodation; access; getting to know them again)?

17. Have you taken/would you be interested in programmes here which might help you with your children when you get out (e.g., on parenting; child-care; school-age problems)?

    Have taken Would like

    Or on being a parent in prison?

18. If you were able to live in a half-way house when you leave, would you like your children to live with you?

    If not why?

SECTION 6 FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

Can we talk now about contact with your family/other members of your family?

1. Where were you raised? What type of community was this? (e.g., reserve, city, town, rural area etc.)

2. Where were you living prior to coming here?

3. Before this sentence, who were you living with?

   e.g., alone
   alone with children
   with (lesbian) partner
   with partner and children
   with parents/relatives/extended family
   with husband/boyfriend
   with husband/boyfriend and children
   with friends
   other (e.g., hostel) etc.

4. How long had you had this living arrangement?

5. How much contact have you had with your family or friends since you came here?

   Who with e.g.,?

   Husband/cohabitee
   Partner(lesbian)
   Boyfriend
   Parents/relatives/extended family
   Close friends
   Other

   Has this been mainly through:

   letters (how often)
   telephone (how often)
   visits (how many)
   T.A.'s

6. Do you feel you get a lot of support from your family, friends, people you know well?

7. What problems have there been keeping in touch with those you want to be in contact with (e.g., transport; costs; accommodation; emotional)?

   What solutions do you think would help to avoid this?

8. If more contact were arranged, what kind would you like (e.g., from family, native counsellors, volunteers from outside)?

SECTION 7 PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL ABUSE

There has been a lot of discussion in the last few years about women being knocked about and physically hurt a lot. It's a very difficult thing to talk about, but we think it is very important to try to help people who have been hurt, and to try to find out how common it is.

1. Have you ever been hit or beaten about?

2. About how often has this happened?

3. How old were you?

   a) a child_____
      Who was involved?_____

   b) a teenager_____
      Who was involved?_____

   c) an adult (over 18)_____
      Who was involved?_____

   d) other

There has also been a lot of talk lately about sexual abuse, I want to ask you just the same questions.

4. Have you ever been attacked or abused sexually?

5. About how often did this happen?

6. How old were you?

   a) a child_____
      Who was involved?_____

   b) a teenager_____
      Who was involved?_____

   c) an adult (over 18)_____
      Who was involved?_____

   d) other

7. Have you ever been involved in counselling or programmes for victims of physical or sexual abuse?

	Before	In Here
What kind:		
a) individual therapy		
b) group therapy		
c) other		
d) none, why?		

8. Did you find them helpful to you or not? What was most useful to you?

9. What kind of support would be helpful to you now -if any?

10. Would you like to take part in (further) counselling or programmes about abuse now?

What would they (it) be like? (e.g., individual, group, other?)

SECTION 8 SELF-DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOUR

Can we talk now about how some of the ways in which people cope?

1. Have you ever hurt yourself in some way e.g., by slashing, or cutting yourself, or attempted suicide?

Was this before coming here, while in here or both?

Has this happened often or just once or twice?

Why did you feel you had to do this, was there a particular event?

2. What would have helped you/would help you in the future to avoid doing it? (counselling/friends/staff/or other people to talk to when you felt you need to)

3. Would you like to be involved in some counselling or a programme to help with this kind of behaviour?

No - not interested No - already been involved
Yes

SECTION 9 DISCIPLINE INSIDE

What about getting on with people in here generally?

1. How to you get along with correctional staff and other staff here generally?

2. How do staff get along with you and other inmates?

3. Do you think staff are sensitive to your feelings and views or to your cultural background and way of life?

4. Can you communicate with staff - do you have any problems with language, or being understood?

5. What is your opinion of the rules and discipline in here?

6. What is your opinion of the disciplinary decisions (e.g., disciplinary or Warden's Court)?

7.

8. Is there an inmate grievance procedure? - if so how is it working?

9. When and if discipline problems occur, what do you think are the main causes (e.g., not being able to control things outside; relationships; drugs, money, gambling debts)?

10. Are there arguments/physical fights between inmates, if so what are they mainly about?

(write in)
personal possessions, things
situations
relationships
boredom, being fed up
feeling victimized/provoked
other

What about disagreements with staff?

(write in)
rights, visits etc
having things you shouldn't
feeling watched too closely
feeling victimized/provoked
other

11. Have you been involved in any physical fights or arguments since coming here?

(Minor Interm. Major)

With staff

With inmates

Has this happened often?

Why was this?

12. Do you think there is any way that these sorts of difficult situations could be avoided (e.g., a quiet place where you could go to get away/someone on hand you could talk to/more understanding from staff about why this happens)?

13. Since you came here have you spent any time in:

About how much

a) segregation (disciplinary/administrative?)
b) protective custody
c) hospital
d) Regional Treatment Centre or equivalent

Why was this?

SECTION 10 PROGRAMMES

1. We've talked about training and education programmes, and programmes for alcohol or drugs and a number of things. Are there any other kinds of programmes we haven't talked about which you have taken in prison, or would like to take?

What about:	Have taken	Would like
(when, how long, where, usefulness)		
a) life skills		
b) social (communication) skills		
c) spiritual programmes		
d) cultural programmes		
e) programmes about women's health & well-being; AIDS		
f) legal help and advice with personal matters		
g) how to budget, deal with taxes, manage money		
h) coping with a long-term sentence		
i) pre-release programme		
j) parenting workshops/child development		
k) work-release		
l) other		

2. What has been your experience with native spiritual and cultural programs in prison?

3. So thinking about all the kinds of programmes - what really are the most important ones for you?

4. What do you think about contact with groups or individuals from outside?

   native leaders or spiritual leaders
   social, community groups
   individual volunteers
   others

5. Would you like more?

SECTION 11 ALTERNATIVES

Can we talk now about some of the different kinds of places you have been in?

1. How much time have you spent in provincial prisons? (How many sentences?)

   a) on provincial sentences
   b) on federal sentences

   How long have you been here on this sentence?

2. Have you ever spent any time in P4W (previously/this sentence)?

3. What do you think are the advantages or disadvantages of being in a provincial prison or in P4W if you have a federal sentence?

	Provincial	P4W
Advantages		
Disadvantages		

4. What about being in an institution with men - have you ever spent time in a co-correctional prison?

   Where was this?

5. How much involvement was/is there with the men?

6. Would you like/do you prefer to be in a co-correctional prison if you had the choice?

   If yes, under what conditions?

   If no, why?

7. What kind of place works best for you? Do you think you need a lot of security inside and outside the prison, or just on the outside, or not much at all?

8. If there was some choice what sort of place would you want to do your time in - what would work best for you?

   a) in P4W

   b) in one central prison for federal women i.e., in another building, with different facilities

   c) in a prison in a region nearer to your home but still only with federal women

   d) in a regional prison with separate facilities but sharing some programmes with federal men

   e) in a regional prison sharing all facilities & programmes, canteen etc. with men

   f) in a provincial prison for women near your home

   g) in a provincial prison for men and women

   h) in a smaller community residence for women as close to your home or band as possible?

   i) other

9. So overall what's most important for you?

   - being as near home as possible
   - being with women only
   - having access to the kinds of programmes you want
   - being with people serving sentences like yours

10. Have you ever had contact with male guards in a prison?

    Would you like to see some/more male guards here?

    If yes, under what conditions?

    If not why?

11. [P4W only] Unit Management recently started here have you any comments about how it is working?

12. Are there any specific kinds of training you think staff in a women's prison should have?

SECTION 12 RELEASE

1. Where do you think you want to go after this sentence?

   Who do you think you want to live with?

2. What kinds of services do you think you will want when you get out of prison?

   (Would any of the following programmes or services in the community be important for you?)

   help finding a place to live
   a place to live
   half-way house
   help finding a job
   training for a job
   help staying off drugs/alcohol
   help with mental health problems
   other

3. Do you feel that staff here know/understand what's available in your community?

4. If you have been released before - what was your experience - did you get the kind of help you needed?

FINALLY

Is there anything else that we have not talked about which you think we should?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP